HEROIC DEEDS OF THE BRITISH NAVY



Dorking Men's Own Society.

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Prize

awarded to

Bro J. Brett

T. R. GRANTHAM, President.

A. SCRAGG,
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STIRRING DEEDS OF BRITAIN'S SEA-DOGS IN THE GREAT WAR



A gallant rescue from the fore-top of H.M.S. "Inflexible"
(After the black-and-white drawing by PHILIP DADD)

Fr. [*Page* 328]

HEROIC DEEDS OF THE BRITISH NAVY

IN THE GREAT WAR

BY

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AUTHOR OF
"THE STORY OF NAPOLEON" "THE STORY OF NELSON"
"THE STORY OF LORD ROBERTS" ETC.



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DEDICATED TO

LUCY, MYRTLE,

NORAH & PRUDENCE

JELLICOE

THE RED DUSTER

On all the seas of all the world there passes to and fro,
Where the ghostly iceberg travels or the spicy trade winds blow
A gaudy piece of bunting, a royal, ruddy rag—
The blossom of the ocean lanes, Great Britain's merchant flag.

The cargo tank from Bristol, the trawler out of Hull,
And a thousand craft of all degrees, from Sydney Heads to Mull,
They bear the old Red Duster, proud-flung, across the main,
And, whether war or whether peace, they wear it home again.

The cannon's roar the Channel o'er is heard in Dover town,
And now and then with Englishmen a British craft goes down.
Safe hid at Kiel are ships of steel, and underneath their nose,
With the old Red Duster at their sterns, a fleet of England goes:

A fleet, but not of battleships, though manned by men as brave
As they who guard their native shores upon the blood-stained wave;
A fleet that keeps its country's trade secure from warfare's wrong,
And brings great golden cargoes home, from Cape Town to Hong-Kong.

They dare the North Sea's perils, the deadly drifting mine;
They risk the sneaking submarines, the shrapnel's fateful whine.
They round the last grim headland, to open sea they go
With the old Red Duster flaunting in the face of England's foe.

The Holland ships go sailing by, the vessels of Japan,
And flying the Tricolour plunges many a merchantman;
There's only one flag missing, which was flown so wide before—
You may search the seas in vain for it from Jaluit to the Nore.

Its crimson field is coloured with the blood of Britain's sons
Spilled in a thousand fights where'er the tide its courses runs,
That Britain still may rule the waves and, free as sheering gull,
The sea-stained tramp may plough her way through storm, or doldrums' lull.

And so, their country battle-locked, the English ships go by,
Where the Arctic icepack tosses or the coral islands lie,
With the old Red Duster flying down the heaving ocean ways,
While to guard it men are dying as they died in Nelson's days.

HERBERT M. AYRES

Foreword

WE sometimes speak of the supremacy of the British Navy as a great national tradition. In so doing we are apt to forget that unless a tradition is vital and full of life it rapidly degenerates into stagnation and death. Sea power is neither the creation of a few years—a fact that probably the Germans now fully realize—nor is its possession a guarantee of its retention, as Spain and Holland well know. It is always in the making. Although Britain owes much to the heroes of the past, she cannot over-estimate the work of living men who are responsible for the designing, administration and working of her modern fleets.

Every citizen can assist the Navy by taking an intelligent interest in its activities and helping to create a healthy public opinion regarding its upkeep. The Navy is Britain's first and last court of resort. Without its assistance the British Expeditionary Force could not have been flung across the Channel in those vital opening weeks of the Great War, the superb fighters of India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many another place coloured red on the map of the world would have been rendered

powerless, and the transports which are lying at Emden would have disembarked their cargoes of barbarians on an English beach.

Many a great act that would make the blood tingle in the telling must go unsung. When the moment has struck, the highest courage has been instantly exhibited in the sleek destroyers that come and go, in the light cruisers that know each sandbank off the German coast as a Londoner knows the Strand, in the battle cruisers that have fought with Beatty off the Danish coast and with Sturdee off the Falkland Islands, in the great sledge-hammer super-Dreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet, in the submarines that have dared the deadly mine-fields, in the humble mine-sweepers that fish for canned death, and in the seaplanes that keep an ever-watchful eye aloft.

When Jack Tar abandoned his tarpaulin petticoat his backbone remained where it had always been, and it is still stiff. If the smell of hemp has been succeeded by the reek of oil, his nose is still keen on the scent of the enemy. To bring him into the fight quicker, the creaking of the sails has given place to the rhythm of the turbine. Jack's immediate environment has altered but the sea has not, and Jack is very much like the sea.

HAROLD F. B. WHEELER

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STIRRING DEEDS OF BRITAIN'S SEA-DOGS

CHAPTER I

SIR JOHN JELLICOE'S RED-LETTER DAYS

THEY call him 'Silent John' in the Navy. It is a title of intense respect, not unmixed with affection, and it sums up the man as shrewdly as it is possible for a single adjective to do so. In official circles he is known as Admiral Sir John Rushworth Jellicoe, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleets. The nation refers to him as Jellicoe, with the same easy familiarity as it speaks of Nelson and Drake, although it knows more of the dead heroes than of the living man. A person has to be somebody of importance before Christian names are dropped by the British public. Jack Tar is keen on nicknames, possibly because he has been given one himself, like his colleague, Tommy Atkins. He spares neither Admiral of the Fleet nor coal-trimmer. Lord Fisher, the father of the modern Navy, is 'Hell-fire Jack,' a title more impressive than pleasant, but wonderfully accurate as a summing-up of personality.

He it was who told the good-natured gentlemen of The Hague Conference that "The essence of war is violence. Moderation in war is imbecility." Officers and men regard him with awe and absolute confidence, but it would be untrue to say that they love him. 'Hell-fire Jack' is too addicted to partiality for that. It is an axiom of his policy, and one of his most settled convictions, that "Favouritism is the secret of efficiency." Two of the men he has singled out for attention are Sir John Jellicoe and Sir Percy Scott, the latter the greatest gunnery expert in the world. 'Favouritism' is an unfortunate word, but it is Lord Fisher's own choice. To him its meaning is the training and developing of the most suitable men for a specific purpose. Nearly every officer holding high command to-day is one of Fisher's men, and glories in the fact.

Previous to the breaking out of the Great War, the Admiral who occupies much the same position as that held by the little one-eyed, one-armed sailor who trod the quarter-deck of H.M.S. *Victory* at Trafalgar and has been the uncanonized patron saint of the Navy ever since, was to all intents and purposes quite unknown outside official circles. Whitehall knew him, but the Strand did not. He is as shy of facing the photographer as he is fearless in confronting the enemy. We sometimes speak of a man having nerves of iron; Jellicoe has nerves of steel. They have been tried enough both on land

and sea, as the story of his adventurous life will show. Few officers who survived the ramming of the *Victoria* by the *Camperdown* were considered fit for further service. Their terrible ordeal off the Syrian coast shattered them. Other circumstances were against Jellicoe during that fifteen minutes' tragedy, yet he withstood them all. Physically a small man, mentally he is built on broad lines. He works with amazing rapidity, plays with the same thoroughness as he works, and holds within his spare frame the constitution of a giant. These things are not written down because it is the fashion to attribute something approaching the marvellous in the leaders of men. They are actual facts, as any one who has been privileged to work with 'Silent John' will tell you. "He has the spirits of a schoolboy, and he is always good-humoured and keen. We all like him," is the testimony of a gunner on the *Iron Duke*. "He don't waste words," says an honest old salt, "but when he does speak he hits the mark every time."

There is a wide gap between the Navy of 1805 and that of 1916. Sails have given place to turbines, oak to steel, signalling by flag to messages by wireless, the 32-pr. guns of the *Victory* to the 15-in. guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*. The advance in armament borders on the miraculous. While the total weight of the broadside of Nelson's flagship was 1600 lb., when single-shotted, the shell

of a 15-in. gun weighs 1925 lb., and *Lizzie*, as she is called by her crew, has eight of these powerful weapons. Neither mines nor torpedoes were practicable engines of war in those far-off yet ever near days when England fought against the might of Napoleon. Coal will soon be superseded by oil. The most important factor—the human factor—remains unaltered.

Sir John Jellicoe's appearance bespeaks a commanding personality. He is well knit, with a kind face and wrinkles at the eyes indicative of humour. Like Fisher, he keenly appreciates a joke. The nose is large, the mouth and jaw that of a man of decision. He has kept himself in condition by rackets and running, pastimes which are not usually regarded as particularly fitting for middle-aged folk. At sea he practises 'catches' with a ball and runs round the deck. Nelson, a son of the parsonage, was instinctively religious notwithstanding that on occasions he strayed from the path of moral rectitude. Jellicoe, a son of the sea, is a man of deep religious convictions. The last few minutes of his time in London before he left for the *Iron Duke* were spent in a certain church within a stone's-throw of his house. Men do not scoff at religion on his flagship; they honour their leader for his simple, unaffected piety, and his example is doubtless not without fruit. "We spent our Christmas Day (1914) waiting for the Germans, who did not

appear," he writes. "But we managed to find time for church and for three celebrations of Holy Communion, although the whole time we were cleared for action and all the men were at their guns."

With Nelson, Jellicoe might well and truly say: "I had the happiness to command a band of brothers." On many occasions he has paid glowing tributes to his colleagues on the quarter-deck, in the gun-turrets, and in the engine-rooms, "of whom it is impossible to say too much," and spoken of "the magnificent spirit which prevails." Writing in November, 1914, Sir John says: "Our troops have covered themselves with glory during this war. The Navy has not yet, as a whole, had an opportunity of showing that the old spirit which carried us to victory in the past is with us now, but when our men have had an opportunity of fighting the foe above the water they have shown that they possess the same pluck and endurance as our comrades ashore.

"Nothing can ever have been finer than the coolness and courage shown in every case where ships have been sunk by mines and torpedoes. Discipline has been perfect, and men have gone to their death not only most gallantly but most unselfishly.

"One hears on all sides of numerous instances of men giving up on these occasions the plank which has supported them to some more feeble

comrade, and I feel prouder every day that passes that I command such men.

"During the period of waiting and watching they are cheerful and contented, in spite of the grey dullness of their lives."

On the 5th December 1859, Southampton added to its list of famous men born there the name of John Rushworth Jellicoe. It had been a seaport of importance from the days of the first Edward. In its three docks Henry V had built the *Dreadnoughts* of his day, the *Trinity*, the *Grace de Dieu*, and the *Holy Ghost*. From thence he had set out on his Agincourt campaign in 1415, five centuries before the British Expeditionary Force embarked at Southampton to aid Belgium and France against Germany. The historical associations of the town were not lost on the boy when he could read and think for himself. Everything conduced to give him a love of the sea and of what the sea meant to our Island Realm. People who pin their faith to environment may take comfort in the fact that Jellicoe was born in a great seaport; those who believe in the doctrine of heredity will find their theory abundantly justified in the Admiralissimo of the Grand Fleet, for his father was a captain and his great-grandfather was Admiral Philip Patton, who fought bravely with Hawke and Rodney and was Second Sea Lord in the spacious but difficult days of 1805. Superstitious folk—

there are plenty of them in the Navy—with a fondness for odd figures, like to think that when he assumed command on the eve of the Great War Sir John Jellicoe was in his fifty-fifth year, that he had entered the service when he was thirteen, survived the tragedy of the *Victoria* in 1893, and become Rear-Admiral in 1907. The surname of Admiral Patton is perpetuated in Sir John Jellicoe's youngest daughter, who was christened Prudence Katherine Patton, and it is not a little remarkable that in 1912 the post which the old sea-dog held in 1805 was filled by Sir John. The last Prudence in the Patton family was a brave lady who kept her brothers' establishment going while her loyal menfolk fought worthily and well in behalf of Charles II. Lady Jellicoe also comes of a family intimately connected with the sea. She is a daughter of Sir Charles Cayzer, Bart., head of the owners of the Clan Line of steamers. Her sister is the wife of Vice-Admiral Madden, Sir John's Chief-of-Staff.

Young John Jellicoe found a thousand and one things of interest in his walks abroad with his nurse. Anecdotes of him are few, but one at least is duly authenticated. He does not seem to have climbed a church steeple as did Robert Clive, nor even to have robbed his schoolmaster's orchard as did Nelson. Master John did prove, however, that he had no belief in the time-honoured fear of the majesty of the law as represented by the 'gentleman in blue.'

On a certain occasion he persisted in running across the street. Those were not the days of motor cars and electric trams, but the practice was considered sufficiently dangerous for his nurse to inform him that if he did not stop his antics she would "tell a policeman." The remark was not lost on the youngster. In due course he saw a constable strolling down the road. Without further ado he dashed off to the astonished man and remarked, "What a lot of pretty buttons you have." There is nothing particularly romantic about the story, but it is indicative of that total lack of fear that was to stand him in such good stead in later years.

The red-letter days of the future Admiral's boyhood were those on which his father, the late Captain John H. Jellicoe, returned from one of his long voyages. Then the little lad with the keen, intelligent face would clamber on his father's knee and plead for yarns of ship, sailors, and the sea, and inspect with wide-open eyes the curios that were brought home from strange and far-away lands. It fired him with ambition to know something of these things at first hand. There was never the vexing problem of 'What shall we make him?' to be faced by his parents. Captain Jellicoe determined that his son should enter the King's service. He himself had been offered a commission in the Royal Navy as a reward for having saved the life of a colonial governor, but he felt unable to take advantage of

the opportunity. What the Navy lost was gained by the mercantile marine, for Captain Jellicoe eventually became commodore of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's fine fleet of steamers, and on his retirement was elected a member of the board of directors, a position which he continued to hold until his death, at the ripe old age of eighty-nine, in September, 1914.

After a period of schooling at Rottingdean John Jellicoe 'had his chance,' and right royally did he avail himself of it. He entered the Navy as a cadet on the 15th July 1872. On the *Britannia* he passed first in all the examinations, but was only allowed to keep three of the prizes awarded to him. On the 23rd August 1880 he was promoted lieutenant, and two years later had his first taste of active service by serving in the Egyptian War on board H.M.S. *Agincourt*, receiving the Egyptian Medal and the Khedive's Bronze Star. When he proceeded to the Royal Naval College in 1883, he again showed conspicuous ability, and secured the special £80 prize for gunnery, a branch of the service which from henceforth engaged his special attention.

Jellicoe's third medal was awarded to him in 1886 by the Board of Trade for conspicuous bravery when serving in the armour-plated turret-ship *Monarch*. One day, when the ship was in the Straits of Gibraltar and the wind was blowing 'great guns,' a vessel was discovered to be in a perilous position

on the sands near the Rock. The sea was choppy, and the captain fully realized that if any attempt were made to rescue the distressed crew it would be a particularly hazardous task. British sailors, however, treat danger with praiseworthy contempt when comrades are in distress, and he promptly asked for volunteers to man a boat. The appeal met with ready response, and Jellicoe to his great delight was placed in command of the rescue party. Slipping on their cork jackets, the men were very soon tugging at the oars in a desperate attempt to reach the distressed vessel. The task soon resolved itself into a furious fight with the elements. Wind and sea won the unequal contest. A heavy wave crashed against the craft, almost staved in the planks, and capsized it, fortunately flinging the occupants sufficiently far to prevent any of them from being imprisoned in the upturned boat. It was little short of miraculous that none of the gallant crew was lost. Jellicoe and his little band of heroes were buffeted by the angry waves until they were in an exhausted condition and then cast up on the beach.

Three years later Jellicoe came face to face with the man who is nominally the head of the navy which it is the Admiral's greatest ambition to send to the bottom of the North Sea.

The occasion was a naval review, and the Kaiser was present with some of the vessels of his then insignificant fleet.

Sir John Jellicoe's Red-Letter Days

In the ward-room of H.M.S. *Hood*, "the new Emperor William was the general topic of conversation," says Mr Hugh Horniman, who was present. Of the officers who gathered there Jellicoe "alone hesitated to express an opinion on either the German ships, their personnel or the Emperor. But from the respect with which his words on technical matters were listened to, I gathered that he was no ordinary man. Even in those days John Jellicoe was an officer with a distinguished past and a future to which it was difficult to set any limitations." Did his far-seeing eyes discern a future menace to the peace of the world? His silence suggests that they may have done.

In 1893 H.M.S. *Victoria* was regarded as "perhaps the most splendid specimen of a modern ironclad." So great has been the progress of naval construction during the twenty odd intervening years that the name 'ironclad,' the steel-armoured turret-ship, of which the *Victoria* was considered so fine a representative, and the two 110½-ton guns which constituted her main armament are now entirely obsolete. Compared with the modern Navy, the *Victoria* was smaller than the smallest of our third-class battleships now on the active list. Her crew numbered 650, her displacement was 10,470 tons, her speed over 16 knots. The mammoth guns were carried in a single turret forward, the auxiliary armament being placed above the upper deck on a structure

protected by armour varying from three to five inches in thickness. Twelve 6-in. five-ton guns, twelve 6-pr. rapid-fire guns, nine 3-pr. rapid-fire guns, and six Nordenfeldt guns constituted her auxiliary armament. There were no fewer than eight torpedo tubes, which is considerably in excess of modern requirements.

It was on this ship that Jellicoe was serving when she met with disaster on the 22nd June 1893. He had been gazetted a commander in 1891, and after a spell of work as assistant to Lord Fisher, then a captain and Director of Naval Ordnance, had been appointed to the *Sans Pareil*, from whence he was transferred to Admiral Sir George Tryon's flagship in the Mediterranean.

On the fatal 22nd the squadron of thirteen vessels under Tryon's command was steaming in line abreast, but when off Tripoli the order was given to change the formation to two columns line ahead, leaving an interval of six cables (1200 yards) between the divisions. The starboard column was led by the Commander-in-Chief in the *Victoria*, and the port column by Rear-Admiral Markham in the *Camperdown*. The manœuvre having been effected, Tryon gave instructions to Lord Gillford, the Flag-Lieutenant, to signal that the divisions were to turn 16 points inward, leaders first, the remainder in succession. When Staff-Commander Hawkins-Smith was informed of the proposed evolution he at once saw that as the smallest circle in which the *Victoria*



Sir John Jellicoe and Mr Winston Churchill
J. MATANIA

and *Camperdown* could turn was about 600 yards the result would be a collision. This was pointed out to Tryon, who altered his plan so as to preclude the possibility of disaster. He had scarcely done so before he changed his mind, told Lord Gillford to carry out his previous order, and, as though to emphasize it, wrote the figure 6 on a piece of paper. The signal was made, but the Staff-Commander again doubted its accuracy, and persuaded Lord Gillford to question Tryon on the subject a second time. In his contention the Flag-Lieutenant was supported by Captain the Hon. Maurice Archibald Bourke, who remarked : "You certainly said, sir, it was to be more than six cables." "Leave it at six cables," was the Admiral's only comment.

Admiral Markham, thinking the signal was made in error, disregarded it, and was soon asked by Tryon why the *Camperdown* was delaying the manœuvre. Markham, concluding that his senior officer had some other intention regarding the movement of the *Victoria*, began to turn. In less than four minutes the leader of the port column had rammed the flagship on her starboard bow, tearing a great gaping gash below the water-line. When it was too late, and after the captain had twice warned Tryon of the danger as the ships were approaching, the engines were put at full speed astern, and orders given for closing the water-tight doors and 'out collision mats.'

"There was absolutely no panic," Captain Bourke

stated at the court-martial, "no shouting, no rushing aimlessly about. Officers went quietly to their stations, and everything was prepared, and the men were all in their positions for hoisting out the boats or performing any duty that they may have been ordered to carry out. The men on the forecastle worked with a will until the water was up to their waists, and it was only when they were ordered aft that they left their work to fall in on the upper deck with the rest of the ship's company.

"In the case of the men working below I was a witness to their coolness. When the order was passed down for everyone to go on deck, there was no haste or hurry to desert the flat. I can further testify to the men below in the engine-rooms. In the starboard one, all were in their stations; the engineer officer was there, the artificer, and the stokers. I am sure that those in the port engine-room and the boiler-rooms were equally true to themselves, to the country they were serving, and to the trust that was reposed in them.

"In all the details of this terrible accident one spot specially stands out, and that is the heroic conduct of those who, to the end, remained below, stolidly yet boldly, at their place of duty. All honour to them especially.

"The men fallen in on the upper deck also showed the same spirit. . . . When the men were turned about to face the ship's side, it must have

passed through the minds of many that to 'look out for oneself' would be the best thing to do. The men must have seen the others coming from forward wet, which in itself might have increased their apprehension. This order to turn about was given apparently a minute before the end, and I can hear of not one single instance of any man rushing to the side. It only wanted two or three to start a panic, but I think it should be on record that not one was found who had not that control over himself which characterizes true discipline and order. It has been shown in evidence that no one jumped from the ship until just as she gave the lurch which ended in her capsizing."

Commander Jellicoe was lying in his cabin seriously ill with fever. He knew instinctively what had occurred when the crash came, but, being unaware of the serious nature of the blow, did not get out of his bunk until summoned on deck by his servant. Even then his first thoughts were of others, and before clambering up the ladder he made his way below to see if he could render assistance to anybody who needed it. When the *Victoria* heeled over just before she plunged bows first into the blue waters of the Mediterranean, he was putting up the signal to lower the boats. On coming to the surface after having been dragged down into the awful maelstrom caused by the sinking leviathan, the Commander was helped in the difficult task of

keeping afloat by Mr West, a midshipman. Both were afterwards picked up by one of the boats of the *Edgar*. Among others who were rescued and are playing a part in the Great War were the present Rear-Admiral H. L. Heath, Superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard, and Rear-Admiral A. C. Leveson. Tryon, 21 officers, and 350 men perished as a direct sequel to an error of judgment that may well serve to remind the lay reader of the responsibilities of a commander at sea. Jellicoe's Board of Trade medal went down with the *Victoria*, and on making application to the authorities he was informed that they would be pleased to send him a duplicate if he paid for it. The Commander quite properly declined so generous an offer, and he is still without it.

From Tripoli to China is a far cry, but to a sailor a jaunt of a few thousand miles is scarcely of more consequence than a journey from London to Newcastle to a commercial traveller. When a great anti-foreign spirit began to spread in the Yellow Kingdom in 1900, the result of reforms repugnant to the conservative Manchus and of concessions made to Russia, Germany, France, and Great Britain, the cry of 'China for the Chinese' was taken up with avidity by the revolutionary organization of secret societies known as *I Ho Chuan*, literally, the Righteous Harmony Fists. Looting and massacre on the part of the Boxers—their European designation—in the province of Shantung, a territory having

38,000,000 inhabitants, was followed by the murder of European missionaries and native Christians in other districts. Finally the representatives of the various Powers were ordered to leave Peking, which they refused to do, and made hasty preparations to stand a siege, not only on the part of the Boxers, but also of the Imperial troops. Fortunately Sir Claude Macdonald, who was placed in command of the Legation Quarter, managed to send a telegram to Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, Commander-in-Chief on the China Station, urging the necessity of immediate assistance. Sir Edward, who was well acquainted with the Chinese, having fought them not once but many times in 1857–1862, set out at the earliest possible moment to the relief of the Legations. His motley force of a little over 2000 officers and men, of whom 915 were British and the remainder representatives of those nations which had ships in Chinese waters—France, Russia, Japan, Italy, the United States, Austria and Germany—proved too small for the purpose, but with their nineteen guns they made a very gallant and praiseworthy attempt. Jellicoe, then the Admiral's Flag Captain on the *Centurion*, was Chief of Staff and commanded the Naval Brigade.

When the little army was some twenty or thirty miles from Tientsin it was discovered that the enemy had destroyed the railway, yet Seymour fought his way to Peitsang, where Jellicoe's part in the abortive

expedition came to an unexpected end. This was on the 21st June, a memorable day, as Seymour's dispatch to the Admiralty clearly shows :

"March was resumed at 7.30 A.M. About an hour later a body of from 150 to 200 cavalry was observed in the distance on our left flank of advanced guard. At first it was hoped they might be Cossacks coming to our relief, but as they approached nearer to reconnoitre it was seen that they were Chinese troops. After satisfying themselves they withdrew, but hovered about the left flank for the remainder of the day, firing when favourable opportunities offered ; several well-directed shrapnel from the nine-pounder did much to discourage them and keep them at a distance.

"A few minutes after the withdrawal of the cavalry referred to above the enemy opened fire with a field gun and one-pr. Q.F. Their fire was returned by one 9-pr. and machine guns, and the position of their field gun being disclosed by its smoke our fire was successful in checking it ; although it was brought into action again during the day from time to time, but with the same result, as soon as its position was known.

"Fighting was carried on continuously throughout a succession of villages and in the town of Peitsang, which is the chief place between Tientsin and Yangtsun, and at 6 P.M., the enemy being then in a very strong position, from which we were

unable to dislodge them, during the evening a halt was made, and further movements considered. It was then decided that after supper and two or three hours' rest the forces should make a night march, starting after midnight as our best chance of getting through.

"Our advance during the 21st was probably not more than six miles owing to the stubborn resistance of the enemy and their increased gun-power." In the list of officers recommended "for their Lordships' favourable consideration," the first is "Captain John R. Jellicoe, my Flag Captain, who was, as always, of most valuable help, both by his judgment and action, till disabled by a serious wound at the battle of Peitsang on 21st June." In due course the Admiralty requested Seymour to express to Jellicoe and to all concerned "their unqualified satisfaction at receiving this high commendation of their conduct," and the commander was made a Companion of the Bath.

One who was with Jellicoe on this occasion related his experiences in *The Pall Mall Gazette*. "I was beside him," he says, "when he was wounded during the disastrous retirement on Tientsin. I see him as he lay in the angle of a native house where we had placed him to be out of the reach of the Chinese fire, and I recall the steadfast courage of the man when he knew that he had but the very slenderest hope of life. It was

practically impossible that he should recover, said the flagship's doctor, but Jellicoe's indomitable pluck was a factor that still had to be reckoned with. As soon as he could be safely moved, we placed him in a small native boat, in charge of his own coxswain. It was the next day, as I remember, that the latter came with a message that Captain Jellicoe would like to see me in the boat.

"Of course, I went down immediately and found him suffering severe pain from his wound, pain made the worse by the utter misery of the surroundings and by the uncertainty of everything. He wanted to know what I thought of things. Foolishly, perhaps, I tried to make the best of them and told him that I thought we were doing very well, and that there was no doubt at all of our ability to cut our way back to Tientsin, or even to the coast, supposing the foreign settlements to have fallen. I don't think I shall ever forget the contemptuous flash of the eyes he turned on me, or the impatient remark: 'Tell me the truth. Don't lie.'"

Jellicoe was providentially spared for further service. After having been Naval Assistant to the Controller of the Navy and commander of the *Drake*, an armoured cruiser which is still on the active list, he became Director of Naval Ordnance and Torpedoes. This post he filled with conspicuous ability from 1905 until 1907. Within twelve months of assuming office he had raised the percentage

of hits out of rounds from 42 to over 70. In conjunction with Lord Fisher he introduced many of the important inventions of Sir Percy Scott, including the central fire-control system. He loyally co-operated with the First Sea Lord in the far-reaching reforms which were made by the Kitchener of the Navy, believing whole-heartedly in the all-big-gun type of ship, the battle cruiser, and the scout cruiser. Both Jellicoe and Madden were members of the committee which went into the question of the design of the famous *Dreadnought*, the pioneer of a new fashion in naval construction. "On the British Navy rests the British Empire," was Fisher's motto. "Nothing else is of any use without it, not even the Army. We are different from Continental nations. No soldier of ours can go anywhere unless a sailor carries him on his back." Let us never forget that it was during Lord Fisher's first administration that the mighty weapons used in fighting Imperial Germany on the sea were forged, and it is significant that the man who helped him in his giant task was to direct their operation. The reformers met with much opposition, but time has proved the wisdom of their apparent ruthlessness in scrapping old ships, developing the submarine, and introducing turbines and oil. Never was there such a sifting of the naval dust-heap as then, and never was it more fully justified by subsequent events, as we shall have occasion to see.

Toward the end of August, 1907, Jellicoe went back to the quarter-deck as second-in-command of the Atlantic Fleet, hoisting his flag as rear-admiral on H.M.S. *Albemarle*. A year later he returned to Whitehall as Third Sea Lord and Controller of the Navy, where he remained until his appointment in December, 1910, as Commander of the Atlantic Fleet. In 1912 he became Second Sea Lord, a position which he held at the breaking out of the Great War. It is not without significance that in the manœvures of 1913 his fleet succeeded in raiding the Humber and other East Coast positions. Thus on sea and land, as fighter and administrator, reformer and commander, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe has won the confidence which the Empire places in him. His has been a crowded life of incessant activity ; his experiences include a journey in a Zeppelin, for in May, 1913, he looked down on the city of Berlin from the car of the *Hansa* !

CHAPTER II

BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

SOME outstanding events in the world's history have developed with extraordinary and almost imperceptible slowness, others with amazing and dramatic swiftness. Take two typical examples. The seed from which germinated the great upheaval known as the French Revolution was sown in the regal days of Louis XIV, yet over a century and a quarter separated the death of Mazarin and the determination of the Sun King to be his own first minister, and the inglorious flight of Louis XVI and the royal family from Paris to Varennes. Events which issued in the World War may be definitely traced back to the 15th June 1888, when Frederick's fight with death came to an end and Wilhelm II's reign of Divine Right and Impulsiveness began.

In 1890 the young Emperor paid a brief visit to England, an incident in itself of little importance, although in the light of subsequent events it may well be that the result of the British naval manœuvres of that year left a deep and lasting impression on his memory and kindled his vivid imagination. The object of the manœuvres was to ascertain whether it

was possible for a hostile fleet, given a start of twenty-four hours, to seize the trade routes. Sir Culme Seymour, acting the part of enemy, proved the possibility up to the hilt, for Sir George Tryon, who commanded the defending squadrons, failed to ascertain the foe's whereabouts. To play havoc with our ocean-borne commerce was to be one of the important aims of Germany's policy twenty-four years later.

In the working out of his carefully arranged programme in the summer of 1914 the Emperor was forestalled. He reckoned on a weak England ; he found her strong. Up to Sunday, the 2nd of August 1914, in the early hours of which our naval reserves were called up, the German Government may have hoped that Great Britain might have been cajoled into remaining neutral while France was ruined. Yet precautionary measures of a far-reaching nature had been taken by us the previous month. On the 26th of July Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg, the First Sea Lord, cancelled the demobilizing of the ships which had gathered at Portsmouth on the 18th, where they had been reviewed by the King. Some of them, indeed, had already gone to their home ports. He ordered them to 'stand fast.' Thus, to quote Mr Winston Churchill's subsequent letter to the Admiral, " The first step which secured the timely concentration of the Fleet " was taken by Prince Louis, who saw in

the breaking off of diplomatic negotiations between Austria and Serbia on the 25th a menace to the peace of Europe that might involve Great Britain. On the 29th the First Fleet left Portland Roads and took up its war station.

By four o'clock on the morning of the 3rd August the mobilization of the Navy was completed. Lads of fifteen and sixteen years who were playing cricket in the grounds of the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth when the news of possible hostilities was received, pulled up their wickets, dashed off to their quarters, and within four hours had left for active service. The youth of England never responded with greater alacrity or with finer spirit to their country's call. In the evening of that day it was announced by the Admiralty, in words that made one's blood course faster because of their stupendous significance, "The entire Navy is now on a war footing."

The First Sea Lord is responsible for "organization for war and distribution of the Fleet," and Prince Louis' telegram proved him worthy of the trust reposed in him. British diplomacy held its hand until the 4th of August. Had it flung the gauntlet at the Kaiser's feet a few days before, our squadrons would have met the German High Sea Fleet off the Norwegian coast. The ships of Imperial Germany would have been intercepted before they could have reached Wilhelmshaven and

the fortified waters of the Kiel Canal. The result might have changed the whole aspect of the war.

"We do not cherish the slightest desire or intention of disputing Great Britain's mastery of the seas. You are an island people and a supreme fleet is, as you claim, a life and death question for you." These words were uttered by Prince Lichnowsky to a British journalist in October, 1912, just before he left Berlin to take up his appointment as German Ambassador to Great Britain. At 11 P.M. on the 4th August 1914 our ultimatum to Germany expired, and ten minutes after midnight the same Prince Lichnowsky went to 10 Downing Street to receive his papers. He had failed in his effort to silence Great Britain while his countrymen bludgeoned Belgium. For us the tension of years was at an end.

As in the days of Elizabeth, so now. Just before England began her struggle with the mighty power of Spain, Sir John Hawkins, Treasurer and Comptroller of the Navy, penned these words: "We have to choose either a dishonourable and uncertain peace or to put on virtuous and valiant minds, to make a way through with such a settled war as may bring forth and command a quiet peace." King George's message to the Commander-in-Chief was couched in similar language: "At this grave moment in our national history I send to you, and through you to the officers and men of the fleets of

which you have assumed command, the assurance of my confidence that under your direction they will revive and renew the old glories of the Royal Navy, and prove once again the sure shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial." "On behalf of the officers and men of the Home Fleet," ran Sir John Jellicoe's reply, "I beg to tender our loyal and dutiful thanks to your Majesty for the gracious message, which will inspire all with determination to uphold the glorious traditions of the past."

The British Fleet—using the term in a catholic sense, for its operations extended to the Seven Seas—was no sooner under sailing orders than the splendid majesty of its power asserted itself. There was no big action, no Homeric contest, no lightning stroke, such as the public anticipated. Yet its full weight was felt by the enemy. As Mr J. L. Garvin so eloquently put it: "The tentacles of the mighty octopus reached far out into the ocean, but chiefly closed with the grip of strangulation on the throat of the enemy." Germany's ports were hermetically sealed, her oversea commerce paralysed, her colonies isolated, and hundreds of prizes were brought into the harbours of the United Kingdom. Some of her ships escaped because their sailings were cancelled, and others managed to reach neutral harbours. Seven hours before Great Britain declared war, the German Government flashed messages to all its wireless stations, and from thence out to sea: "War declared

upon England; make as quickly as you can for a neutral port." By this means millions of pounds worth of ships and cargoes were saved. On our part, every cable which ran from the Fatherland westward or eastward under the sea was severed within four hours of the outbreak of war. Warnings were sent to the fishing fleets in the North Sea to return to harbour without delay. A few German cruisers were at large in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean, but they did not carry on their depredations for an extended period. The last of the numerous German armed liners was interned at Newport News, U.S.A., in April 1915.

Invasion was rendered well-nigh impossible. Indeed, Mr Fred T. Jane has asserted that 100,000 German troops in transports put to sea and then discovered that our squadrons were waiting for them. On the other hand, ships conveying British soldiers from near and far reached their destination without the loss of a single life. Our vast overseas trade was but little disturbed, thus proving once more the truth of Raleigh's words: "Whoever commands the sea commands the trade; whoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself." Incidentally it may be remarked that no fewer than 500,000 Germans and Austrians, ninety-five per cent. of whom had had military training, were precluded from returning to Europe to bear arms against Great Britain.

Britain's Sure Shield

Germany was in a state of siege. To be sure there was the possibility of naval raids, particularly in foggy weather, as was demonstrated by those on Great Yarmouth, Scarborough, and adjacent towns. It is impossible to maintain a strict cordon of patrol vessels like a chain round the British Isles. In the opening phase of the war the German Navy relied on unscrupulous mine-laying, obviously the resort of a weaker Power, and, later, on submarines. The Eagle was in no haste to come to grips with the Bull-dog; she would peck at him if only to snatch a few hairs.

Great Britain held herself solely responsible for the mastery of the North Sea and the English Channel; she shared the control of the Mediterranean with France. In the Mediterranean, Austria and Germany had three Dreadnought battleships and France had no fewer than eight; of battle cruisers the enemy had one and Great Britain three, of pre-Dreadnought battleships France had eleven against the six of the Central Powers, and while the latter had three armoured cruisers, Great Britain had four and France six. The Allies had numerous light cruisers, submarines, destroyers, and torpedo boats.

In the North Sea, the chief theatre of operations, with its area of some 200,000 square miles, a vast array of floating fortresses was concentrated, divided into three main fleets, each distinct and having its own important work to do, but co-operating in the

general scheme. The First Fleet, in addition to the *Iron Duke*, Sir John Jellicoe's flagship, consisted of four Battle Squadrons, totalling no fewer than nineteen Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts, nine pre-Dreadnoughts, four battle cruisers, four armoured cruisers, four cruisers of the *Devonshire* class and five others, the light cruiser squadron of four ships, half a dozen gunboats converted into mine-sweepers, four flotillas of destroyers, totalling seventy-five vessels and four flotilla cruisers. The Second Fleet was made up of two Battle Squadrons, numbering fifteen pre-Dreadnoughts, the fifth and sixth cruiser squadrons of seven ships, seven mine-layers, four patrol flotillas, consisting of seven flotilla cruisers, seventy-four torpedo boat destroyers, and twenty-four torpedo boats. The Third Fleet was the weakest. Ten useful battleships constituted its two Battle Squadrons, and in addition there were two light cruisers and six cruiser squadrons, totalling thirty vessels. To these dull but formidable statistics must be added seven flotillas of submarines, in all fifty-two. A light cruiser was attached to the *Iron Duke* and each battle squadron.

These figures do not include depot ships, and as a large number of important new vessels have since been added they are of historical interest only. Two destroyer-leaders were purchased from Chili and rechristened *Faulkner* and *Broke*, after two famous naval officers, three monitors were

bought from the Brazilian Government and named *Humber*, *Mersey*, and *Severn*, and the Government took over two battleships, one completed and the other nearly ready, then on the stocks to the order of Turkey. The last-mentioned Dreadnoughts were renamed *Agincourt* and *Erin*. Previous to the outbreak of hostilities a proclamation was issued authorizing the Admiralty to use any British ship within the British Isles and the adjacent waters for Government purposes. By the middle of March, 1915, no fewer than 1500 merchant vessels were in commission as H.M. ships and auxiliary craft. As an indication of the increasing demand, 240 more were required in the following November and December. Many private yachts were also engaged for patrol duty and Red Cross work, and a motor boat service reserve was formed.

In addition, many trawlers and drifters were immediately taken over for the perilous work of mine-sweeping, and every fisherman became a particularly active coastguard. Prize money not exceeding £1000 was offered for information leading to the capture or destruction of any enemy vessel, from a mine-layer to a submarine. For information of less importance, but resulting in an enemy vessel being sighted and chased, a sum not exceeding £200 was awarded.

The effective German Navy consisted of thirteen Dreadnoughts ready, and three building, four battle

cruisers, twenty-two older battleships, six armoured cruisers, twenty-four light cruisers, over one hundred and thirty destroyers, forty-eight torpedo boats, and between twenty and thirty submarines. Several vessels were on foreign service. In the Far East were two armoured cruisers, three light cruisers, three old cruisers, four small vessels, and two destroyers. Three obsolescent cruisers were in the vicinity of Australia, a light cruiser and three old cruisers in African waters, and a fast cruiser, the *Karlsruhe*, somewhere near the West Indies.

A word or two about the fortifications that guard the coast of the German Empire and of its naval bases will help us to better appreciate and understand the gallant deeds of Britain's sea-dogs as the story proceeds.

Until June, 1890, Heligoland, which lies off the mouth of the Elbe, and only some twenty-eight miles from the mouths of the Weser and the Eider, belonged to Great Britain. In that month Lord Salisbury ceded the island to Germany for Zanzibar, which from 1886 had been a German protectorate. Heligoland had been ours since its capture in 1807, in the days of our war with Napoleon, when it proved of wonderful service as a rendezvous for ships of the British Fleet, and also for the purpose of storing goods, which were smuggled into Europe whenever opportunity occurred, despite the Emperor's embargo on English products. The arrangement of

1890 was made without the knowledge of the Lords of the Admiralty, and was vigorously opposed by Lord Rosebery in the House of Lords. It was regarded by the British nation as the bartering away of a slice of territory of sentimental value rather than of practical importance, for a slice of land which a British political agent, Sir John Ward, had done much to develop. To be sure, Heligoland seemed destined to provide Father Neptune with a meal, for, like certain parts of our own East Coast, it was slowly crumbling away. Centuries of pounding had reduced it to a tiny islet, for in A.D. 800 it had a coast-line of 120 miles and an area approaching 500 square miles. Still, while it lasted it was a little bit of England on the Continent.

In Germany the exchange was more popular, although there was a good deal of criticism, but it was not long before this little Holy Island, for that is the meaning of its name, loomed into prominent public notice, and united Germany began to cheer. The total area of Heligoland is only 130 acres, the size of a small farm. It is divided into two distinct parts by the action of the sea, the largest of which, Rock Island, is a mere strip of land about a mile long and 600 yards broad, while previous to the Great War Sandy Island was chiefly used as a bathing resort. Heligoland has been transformed by the skill of engineers, and at a cost

of several million pounds sterling, into a miniature Gibraltar. It bristles with heavy guns, armoured turrets are almost everywhere in evidence, and concrete and armour plate now protect it from the onslaught of both sea and enemy. It can shelter the largest ships of the Kaiser's Fleet, and has proved an extremely serviceable base for torpedo and air-craft. Since August, 1914, new big guns have been installed, houses have been destroyed, trees cut down, and the inhabitants transferred to the mainland. The only women on the island are hospital nurses. Between Heligoland and the mainland is the Bight, now famous as the scene of the action of the 28th August 1914.[1]

Green is the land,
Red is the rock,
White is the strand—
These are the colours of Heligoland.

In 1915, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its passing into the hands of Germany, the papers of the Fatherland eulogized the Kaiser's foresight, and remarked that without Heligoland the present war would have been impossible for Germany. Undoubtedly the Emperor had been remarkably astute, for he had far-reaching plans for Heligoland in connexion with the canal which was being dug at the moment of transfer. The Imperial War Harbour of Kiel, which is on the Baltic, is to

[1] See Chapter IV.

Germany what Portsmouth is to England, a great naval arsenal, powerfully defended by the batteries of Friedrichsort, Laboe and Moltenort. His plan was to link it up with the North Sea by means of the big 'ditch,' sixty miles in length. This canal was begun in October, 1887, in the reign of Wilhelm I, the present monarch's grandfather, and finished in 1895, at a cost of £8,000,000. The introduction of the huge battleships of a modern fleet necessitated the widening and deepening of the canal, adding probably £12,000,000 to the original outlay. These works were not completed until June, 1914—two months before the outbreak of war with Great Britain. At the opening ceremony British men-of-war were present, and their crews were entertained by the sight of a Zeppelin flying overhead.

The High Sea Fleet can now operate in either the North Sea or the Baltic, emerging from Wilhelmshaven or through the Great Belt and the Skager Rak. At both ends the canal is amply protected by fortifications—at the western end by those of Brunsbüttel, near which it issues, by Heligoland, the island of Neuwerk, and Wilhelmshaven, in the estuary of the Jahde, the most important German naval station in the North Sea. Bremerhaven, opposite Wilhelmshaven and at the mouth of the Weser, is a base for torpedo boats and destroyers, while farther up the estuary is Bremen, the second

commercial port of the Empire, where battle cruisers are built. Emden, about seventy kilometres from Wilhelmshaven and the most westerly naval base, is joined to the latter by a canal, and is a base for torpedo craft. It is defended by the island of Borkum. Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the Elbe, is heavily fortified to guard the estuaries of that river and of the Weser, and serves as the home of mine-layers and mine-sweepers. At Brunsbüttel vast sums have been expended for the provision of docks and places of storage for oil and coal. The island of Sylt, off Schleswig, is another base for torpedo boats.

To keep a careful watch in the vicinity of Heligoland and at the exit of the Baltic, to 'mask' the German Fleet, was thus the most important task of our North Sea patrols. Outside Sir John Jellicoe's cabin on the *Iron Duke* is a little silver brush presented to him by a group of admirers, a fitting memento of certain events which happened on the 9th and 10th September 1914, when numerous squadrons and flotillas "made a complete sweep of the North Sea up to and into the Heligoland Bight. The German Fleet," adds the official report, "made no attempt to interfere with our movements, and no German ship of any kind was seen at sea."

Safe behind the shelter of land forts and mine-fields, the enemy refused to accept this bold and open challenge. Britain had obtained the mastery of the sea.

CHAPTER III

THE SHIP OF CALM COURAGE

IN the first disaster that befell a unit of the British Navy men and officers alike proved that in bravery and discipline they were entirely worthy of the superb traditions of the service. On Wednesday, the 5th August 1914, H.M.S. *Amphion* and the Third Destroyer Flotilla were patrolling the North Sea and won for us the first success of the war. At noon, after a chase of about thirty miles, the *Königin Luise*, a passenger vessel of 2163 gross tonnage belonging to the Hamburg-Amerika line, was sunk. She had been specially fitted for mine-laying, and was engaged in her nefarious work when sighted about sixty miles from Harwich by a trawler, who reported that the ship was "throwing things overboard."

Cleverly disguised as she was to resemble a Great Eastern mail steamer, Captain C. H. Fox, the commander of the flotilla, was not to be deceived when he came up with her. A shot whizzed across her bows, whereupon the mine-layer opened fire. Four shots from the guns of the new destroyer *Lance*, which had only been handed over by her builders on the previous Saturday, proved

sufficient to send her to the bottom, and of these shots three had devastating effect. The first tore away the liner's bridge, the third and fourth shattered the stern, and within six minutes she had completely disappeared with her evil cargo. The captain pulled out a revolver, threatened his men, and had to be taken prisoner by force. Of the crew of probably 120 or 130 nearly fifty were saved. Twenty-eight wounded men were conveyed to Shotley Naval Barracks without delay.

The *Amphion*, a light cruiser, belonged to what is known as the *Boadicea* class, with a tonnage of 3440, a complement of 320, and an armament of ten 4-in. and four 3-pr. guns. Continuing her search, by a cruel irony she became a victim of a mine a few hours after the sinking of the *Königin Luise*. She was returning to Harwich for coal, and when approaching the scene of the previous day's operation, altered her position to avoid the possibility of disaster from any of the mines that might have floated up from the wreck or been laid previous to her sinking. Without the slightest warning, the fore part of the ship was shattered by a tremendous explosion, which killed nearly 130 of our own brave fellows, and twenty of the German prisoners of war who were confined in that quarter. She was struck just abaft the forward bulkhead.

When the disaster occurred a sheet of flame enveloped the bridge, and Captain Fox fell insensible

on the fore and aft bridge. When he came to consciousness he discovered himself surrounded by the wreck of everything connected with the navigation of the vessel. Telegraph and speaking tubes were reduced to a mass of tangled brass. Stumbling down as best he could, be made his way to the engine-room, and shouted to the engineer to stop. Just before the 'black gang' had been working to the accompaniment of 'Rule, Britannia!' Not a few of them were burned to death by the firing of the oil fuel. Thirty seconds after she had struck the canister of hate, flames were enveloping the bows and it was known that nothing could save the ill-fated ship. While the destroyers were coming up the injured were conveyed to the now uplifted stern. Fortunately the *Amphion* lived for a considerable time after having received her death-blow, but the crew had scarcely abandoned her, the wounded having first been tenderly lifted down into the boats, before the wreck lumbered into a second mine which exploded the fore magazine. A 4-inch gun was hurled skyward, but fortunately came down at a safe distance, although bits of flying steel struck some of the rescue boats and the flotilla, while one of the shells burst on the destroyer *Lark*, some 150 yards away, and killed two of the rescued crew and a German prisoner. Even then the well-built vessel did not finally surrender, but remained a hideous floating skeleton for a quarter of an hour.

"Every order," says Captain Fox, "was promptly obeyed without confusion or perturbation." Perhaps the *Amphion* will be known to history as 'the ship of calm courage.'

"All are thirsting to get back and have another go at the Germans," said an injured officer in hospital. That is the spirit which maintains the Empire. Another survivor wrote that he could not say whether he would go to sea again, "but if they stand in need of my poor services I am quite ready to go, and if necessary, go altogether, for it is for the King, country, home and loved ones that every one is fighting for. . . . Everything and everybody seemed to float before my eyes during those trying twenty minutes while we stood in two lines awaiting our fate. I have never seen such bravery and coolness in the face of death in all my life." A boy coming from a truant school, who joined the *Amphion* as a stoker and was soon promoted to the post of engineer's writer, sent this as his last message: "We are out to-night under sealed orders. We have got everything ready for war here, and I sincerely hope we go and fight the Germans, as they want a lesson. If we do, I will do my best to bring credit to the school by doing my utmost and not acting cowardly."

Captain Fox was almost immediately given command of the *Faulkner* (one of the destroyer-leaders built for Chili), and received by the King.

Shortly afterward he was transferred to the new light cruiser *Undaunted*, a name splendidly appropriate, for it was on this ship that he avenged the *Amphion* on the 17th of the following October. Accompanied by the destroyers *Lance*, *Lennox*, *Legion*, and *Loyal*, he scored a brilliant success by sinking four enemy destroyers with the loss of only one officer and four men wounded, and but slight damage was incurred by the British vessels. The action took place off the mouth of the Scheldt. "Am pursuing four German destroyers," ran the first wireless message from the *Undaunted*, followed about an hour later by the equally terse but much more interesting phrase: "Sunk the lot."

The German destroyers were numbered S115, S117, S118, and S119 respectively, ships completed eleven years before, and having a speed of 28 knots and a crew of fifty-six. They were sighted a considerable distance away, and immediately given chase. The engagement began when they were five or six miles distant, the British gradually closing in on the enemy despite their attempts to shake them off and to make the work of the gunlayers difficult by frequent changes of course. Several torpedoes were launched by the Germans, but the *Undaunted* and her consorts managed to dodge them all.

"We engaged the enemy's four destroyers," writes Mr William Pegg, leading wireless tele-

graphist on the *Undaunted*, "and finished them off nicely in about an hour and twenty minutes—pretty smart work, eh? I was on watch in the wireless telegraphy office, but went on deck to watch the firing. It looked pretty awful to see their ships go down, especially one, whose magazine blew up in one big flare. A lot of German sailors were swimming, but, as you can guess, we had no time to pick them up; we were too busy. You know it would have been quite possible to have got torpedoed through stopping. As it was, they tried hard to torpedo us, but our skipper was there every time and simply altered our course and we steamed past them. They fired ten torpedoes at our ship alone.

"The last to go took a lot of sinking, so we ordered one of our destroyers—the *Legion* I think it was—to take off her survivors. She sent a boat to her, but when the boat was being rowed alongside the dirty cads opened fire and blew off a lieutenant's foot, and a seaman had his leg blown off. The latter has since died. Then we gave her a couple of additional shots to go on with, and she finished. We captured thirty Germans, including one officer. None of the enemy's shots hit our ship, I'm glad to say. We had all our boats smashed by concussion from our guns, and missed a cloud of shrapnel by a few yards. A torpedo which we dodged by yards would otherwise have caught us right in our wireless office. One thing has been amply demonstrated:

our captain is O.K., and everybody on board knows it. The way he manœuvred our ship around those torpedoes was marvellous."

When, a little over a week following Captain Cecil Fox's fine action, it was announced that he had been obliged to relinquish his command on account of ill health, universal sympathy was expressed throughout the Navy.

There was only one living thing on board the British ships which showed signs of fear. It was poor little Jacko, the mascot monkey of H.M.S. *Loyal*, who, having survived the discomforts of war service with the British Naval Brigade during the Boxer rebellion in China, was evidently of opinion that he should be allowed to spend his remaining years in peace. Jacko jumped into a fish-kettle in the cook's galley, and did not emerge until the order 'Cease fire' had been given.

In a rough sea Jacko was quite fearless, but the noise of the guns sorely tried his nerves. One dark night in the following December, his partiality for clambering about the deck when half a gale was blowing and the ship was rolling and pitching led to his untimely death. He fell overboard and disappeared, and although everything was done to find him, the search was unavailing.

Life on the North Sea is not pleasurable in these mosquito craft when rough weather sets in. Although the modern destroyer has developed into a

ship of considerable dimensions, she is almost invariably 'wet' by reason of her great speed, despite her high forecastle. It frequently happens that the commanding officer and others above deck have to be lashed to the rails to prevent their falling overboard. Spindrift and sea are sufficient to soak through the toughest oilskin, and in winter it seems as though the icy wind were trying to hack its way to your very marrows. "Talking of cold, listen," writes a sailor. "Last night I wore a flannel vest, woollen pants, thick socks, shirt, knitted cardigan coat, thick blanketty combination suit, rubber oilskin, two woollen helmets, sou'wester, thick mittens and heavy sea-boots, and was absolutely numbed whilst at my gun from 8 P.M. to midnight and 4 A.M. to 7 A.M.; spray cut like hail too, and the wind was like a knife; 24 hours we had without a break, a sneezing nor'-wester."

Modern destroyers such as the 'L' class which fought with Captain Fox are all engines and armament, for their turbines develop 24,500 horse-power, giving a speed of 29 knots, and the guns number three 4-in. and one machine gun. In addition there are two double torpedo tubes mounted on the deck that can be fired on either broadside. These guns and tubes are never without an attendant on the *qui vive*, and at night, whenever there is 'a certain liveliness' apparent, the men whose duty it is to feed them with their deadly meals sleep close to them



A British Destroyer
MONTAGUE DAWSON

when they are off watch. "It isn't comfortable, but it's necessary," sums up the philosophy of these stoical sailor boys. At intervals throughout the night the cook may endeavour to bring cocoa to the men on guard, but it is not always possible when the boat is head to wind and sea, and it is not uncommon for the galley fire to be washed out when it is most needed.

If destroyers are not always well-behaved in a storm, they are usually thoroughly seaworthy. Wrecks and accidents do occur to them, of course, as to every type of vessel in the Navy. The storm which lashed the sea to fury in the last week of December, 1914, coupled with the absence of warning lights, caused a T.B.D. to lose her bearings and go ashore on the rocky coast near St Andrews. After rescuing most of the destroyer's crew the Crail lifeboat was stove in by being dashed against the beach, the few remaining men, including the captain, being taken off by the St Andrews lifeboat. At about the same time the *Venus*, a cruiser of 5600 tons, was struck by a furious gale off the west coast of Ireland, which snapped the foremast, damaged the bridge, and threatened to engulf her. She shipped such huge quantities of water that she was compelled to run before the storm. Contrast this ship with torpedo craft varying from 275 to 1350 tons and you will get some idea of the injuries the smaller boats are likely to sustain in similar weather.

Britain's Sea-dogs

Sir Christopher Cradock, the Hero Admiral of the battle off Coronel,[1] knew a great deal about life in destroyers, and he keenly appreciated the work of the men who have far more difficult and dangerous tasks to perform than their comrades on the monster super-Dreadnoughts and giant battle cruisers, the 'heavy fathers' of the fleet. "Where," he asks, "is the nation which breeds the men who, for humanity's sake, have such confidence in their skill that they will voluntarily imperil all personal position and past service, besides risking their frail craft—long as a frigate, and whose fragile sides are so thin that a boathook head will dent them—to perform some deed of sea rescue, most dangerous to even a stout, handy lifeboat tug built for the purpose?"

Sir Christopher was thinking more particularly of such work as the saving of an Italian vessel that was rescued from destruction while driving on a lee shore off Capri and towed to safety in the teeth of a howling gale; but many exploits of consummate daring and bravery could be told of the young lieutenants and crews of T.B.D.'s in the Great War. A month after the first gun had thundered on Belgian soil four youths in a coble off Flamborough Head were in the utmost danger in boisterous weather. They had worked at the pumps for three hours and their strength was almost exhausted. A destroyer happened to pass in the nick of time.

[1] See Chapter X.

Those on the bridge thought they heard shouts for help, and on flashing their searchlights across the inky waters discovered the coble. Instantly their craft was manœuvred alongside and the lads were hauled on board. Two minutes later the cockle-shell sank. Off Cap Spartel, where the P. & O. liner *Delhi* met with disaster, the cargo boat *Trostburg*, a large ship of 7000 tons, was wrecked in March, 1915. Despite terrific seas, a British cruiser and three torpedo boats ran imminent risk and rescued several of the crew.

The destroyer is the natural foe of the submarine. Its great speed and the ease with which the ship can be manœuvred so as to dodge a torpedo and ram the craft which fired it have caused the commanders of German under-water vessels to treat it with a great deal of respect.

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OF THE BIGHT

EARLY this morning a concerted operation of some consequence was attempted against the Germans in the Heligoland Bight." In this modest way the British Admiralty announced on the 28th August 1914 the first naval engagement of the Great War. It was really a bold and brilliant action, fought almost under the guns of armour-plated Heligoland, at no great distance from the coast of the Fatherland, and consequently in such a position as rendered it possible for the High Sea Fleet, the pride and boast of Imperial Germany, to take part. The Dreadnoughts of the enemy, however, declined the cordial invitation to come out and fight.

The force commanded by Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, acting presumably under the immediate direction of the Lords of the Admiralty, consisted of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, the First Light Cruiser Squadron, the First Battle Cruiser Squadron and the Seventh Cruiser Squadron, a goodly number of vessels. "The principle of the operation was a scooping movement by a strong force of destroyers, headed by

the *Arethusa*, to cut the German light craft from home, and engage them at leisure in the open sea." Thus the official announcement, but we may be sure that nothing was left to chance, and that had the German Navy appeared in force Sir John Jellicoe would have made his presence felt in no uncertain manner.

Sir David Beatty, Commander of the First Battle Cruiser Squadron, was at the time our youngest admiral, being but forty-three years of age. Throughout the Navy he is associated with good fortune and rapid promotion, hence his nickname of 'Lucky Beatty.' His record is certainly notable. When he became a captain he was the youngest officer of that rank in the service. He was gazetted as a rear-admiral at a younger age than Nelson. During the Sudan campaign he served under Lord Kitchener and won the Distinguished Service Order. He led what was practically a forlorn hope when the Naval Brigade was attempting the relief of the Legations at Peking, in which it will be remembered that Sir John Jellicoe also played a gallant part. He married the daughter of an American millionaire, and once thieves stole his medals and decorations—and dropped them. Any Jack Tar on the *Lion*, his flagship, will reel off this list with great gusto. It is part of the stock-in-trade of the men who serve under him.

At the outbreak of hostilities Sir David Beatty

was given the rank of Acting Vice-Admiral, and was promoted to Vice-Admiral on the 9th August 1915. From his portraits one would imagine him to be tall and broad. In reality he is short and slender, like the Commander-in-Chief. He is energetic, full of good humour, and modest. After he had 'dug them out' of the Bight and sunk the *Blücher*,[1] he wittily referred to the work of the Navy as barging about the North Sea. "More than a year ago," he averred, "we started this war in the Navy with a whoop of joy. We were at last to put to the proof the weapon which we had spent many weary years in perfecting, the weapon which many thousands of distinguished men had given their lives in making efficient, and we congratulated ourselves upon the opportunity which was thrown into our hands to prove to the world that the British Navy was an absolutely incalculable factor. We started full of promise of what we were about to do, but the promise has fallen away. We thought that we were going to follow in the footsteps of the heroes of one hundred years ago, but what has been the result? We have barged about the North Sea, missing mines and dodging submarines, and our patrol vessels have kept our harbours intact."

When we glance at his career in more detail we can better appreciate why both his officers and men admire and love him, although we cannot feel

[1] See Chapter XII.

the strong personal magnetism which is so marked a feature of his personality to those who are in close touch with him. He is an Irishman, the son of an army officer, Captain D. L. Beatty, of Borodale, Co. Wexford, and he was born on the 17th January 1871, the birthday of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, the victor of Naseby. Entering the Navy as a cadet in 1884, he first experienced the dangers and excitement of active service during the Nile Expedition to the Sudan in 1896. He served under Sir Herbert (now Earl) Kitchener in the arduous work of getting gunboats over the cataracts, and when Commander Colville was wounded during the bombardment of the Dervish stronghold at Hafir, Lieutenant Beatty took over the command of the flotilla and played his part with marked ability and bravery. Two years later he was at Atbara and Khartoum, was promoted to commander and awarded the 4th Class of the Medjidie.

When the Boxer rebellion set China aflame in 1900, Beatty was commander of the *Barfleur*. Again he showed that daring was second nature to him. In one of his letters to the Admiralty Vice-Admiral Sir Edward H. Seymour, K.C.B., Commander-in-Chief, calls attention to the work of his brilliant young subordinate at Tientsin. Under date of the 19th of June he notes: "Two Chinese field guns were placed near the railway embankment opposite the British Concession and opened fire.

Commander Beatty, with three companies of seamen, crossed the river and manœuvred to within 200 or 300 yards in the hope of capturing them with a rush; some Russians moved out at the same time to co-operate. While our men were waiting for the Russians to come up, a large force of Chinese appeared to the right behind a mud wall and poured in a heavy fire, wounding Commander Beatty, Lieutenants Powell (*Aurora*) and Stirling (*Barfleur*), Mr Donaldson, midshipman (*Barfleur*) . . . and 11 men. The force then retired." In the same dispatch Sir Edward Seymour brings specially to the favourable notice of the Lords of the Admiralty "(2) Commander David Beatty, D.S.O., of H.M.S. *Barfleur*. Although suffering from two wounds only partially healed, one of which is likely to cause him considerable suffering and inconvenience for some time, begged to be allowed to accompany the expedition for the relief of the forces under my command. He is thoroughly deserving of any mark of appreciation of his services." He was promoted to Captain over the heads of two hundred officers for his conspicuous gallantry, and he thus, as we have said, became the youngest captain in the Royal Navy.

After further service at sea, Beatty was appointed Naval Adviser to the Army Council in 1906, and in 1908 became an aide-de-camp to King Edward VII. From January, 1912, to the February of the following year he was Naval Secretary to the First

Lord of the Admiralty. He then hoisted his flag as Commander of the Sixth Cruiser Squadron on the ill-fated *Aboukir*. On the 1st March 1913 he was appointed to his present position, and a few weeks before the coming of the great conflict he was called on board the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* and invested with the K.C.B.

In the battle on the 28th August the submarines were used as decoys. Their preliminary work was to entice the enemy into the open. So far as two of them were concerned, this was by no means their first visit to the Bight. Three hours after the outbreak of war E 6 and E 8 had proceeded without their parent ships, the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, to carry out a reconnaisance in the dangerous waters which wash Heligoland. While the Expeditionary Force was crossing to France all the craft constituting the Eighth Submarine Flotilla and the two destroyers kept close watch, maintaining positions which would have enabled them to play havoc with the High Sea Fleet had it come out. They not only kept their stations, but did not return to their base until they were informed that the main operation had been successfully accomplished. "These submarines," their commander, Commodore Roger Keyes, reported, "have since been incessantly employed on the enemy's coast in the Heligoland Bight and elsewhere, and have obtained much valuable information regarding the composition and movement of his

patrols. They have occupied his waters and reconnoitred his anchorages, and, while so engaged, have been subjected to skilful and well-executed anti-submarine tactics; hunted for hours at a time by torpedo craft and attacked by gunfire and torpedoes."

The submarines and their parent ships began their work in preparation for the battle at midnight on the 26th August. Until the light faded on the following day, the *Lurcher*, with Commodore Keyes on board, and the *Firedrake* scouted for their companions, the latter then taking up their pre-arranged stations so as to co-operate with the destroyer flotillas when they appeared. No sooner had the first streaks of dawn stolen across the sky on the 28th than the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* began the preliminary and extremely important business of searching the course that would be taken by the battle cruisers for hostile submarines, performing a similar task to that of a pilot engine in advance of a royal train. This having been satisfactorily accomplished, E 6, E 7 and E 8 came to the surface, and with the parent ships boldly approached 'the island key to Germany.' The object of this bait was to induce the enemy "to chase them to the westward."

Commodore Tyrwhitt, on the light cruiser *Arethusa*, and the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas were now approaching from the north-west at top

speed, ready for instant action. They were followed by the First Light Cruiser Squadron under Commodore Goodenough. Behind them were Beatty's giants. To the south, in such a position as would enable it to stop any attempt on the part of the enemy to escape westward, was the Seventh Cruiser Squadron, commanded by Rear-Admiral Christian, who already had a fine record of active service in West and East Africa to his credit.

The three submarines gently plying on the surface of the placid waters, their conning towers exposed so as to make effective targets for the enemy, with the sleek destroyers following in their wake, were duly observed by the Germans, possibly by two of them in a seaplane. Here was food for cannon. How well 'Five British Men-of-War Sunk' would look as a headline for the newspapers of the Fatherland! What a sale they would have in Unter den Linden! These thoughts must have occurred to the commanders of the German destroyers and the two cruisers which presently came from their lair to catch such easy prey. Apparently taken off their guard, the five patrol ships fled westward, followed by the units of the Imperial fleet.

Suddenly out of the mist there emerged the British light cruisers *Arethusa* and *Fearless*, attended by the sleek greyhounds of the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas. The *Arethusa* is the latest of a long line of ships bearing the honoured name.

She is a light armoured cruiser of a class termed "destroyers of destroyers" by Mr Winston Churchill. The ship had left the dockyard less than forty-eight hours before her first fight. Crew and officers were strangers to each other, and their co-operation again instances the accommodating qualities of the race, traits which have done so much to help us build the Empire. Even a giant express engine has to 'settle down' by insignificant work on goods trains. The *Arethusa* had no opportunities for trips of that kind, but she proved her sterling worth. The armament consists of two 6-in. and six 4-in. quick-firing guns, with two twin torpedo tubes. Her displacement is 3750 tons, oil fuel is used, and her turbines develop a speed of 29 to 30 knots. The *Fearless* is also a light cruiser, carrying ten 4-in. and four 3-pr. guns, and was completed in 1913 at Pembroke.

It wanted a few minutes to seven o'clock when the first enemy vessel was sighted and chased by them. Shortly afterward other German torpedo boats were discovered making for Heligoland, and the course of the British ships was altered to cut them off from this haven of refuge.

"Presently the haze seemed to be growing darker in patches," writes one who was present, and whose letter was communicated to *The Weekly Dispatch*. "But no. The patches were a German light cruiser and a large number of destroyers. The sound of the bugle sent the delighted men in blue

dancing to their stations, and in a moment no sign of life was to be seen, save that the guns slowly converged on the dark shadows before them. When the range reached the 2000 yards' mark the forward 6-in. gun of the British cruiser spoke—a short, sharp crash that hurt the ears, followed by the duller boom of the bursting shell. It was a fight in the dark, where no man could see how his brother fared, and where it was only just possible to make out the opposing grey shadow, and hammer, hammer, hammer at it till the eyes ached and smarted and the breath whistled through lips parched with the acrid, stifling fumes of picric acid.

"Another German cruiser came up, and, ranging by her partner, added to the rain of shells bursting around and upon the struggling *Arethusa*, till, with all save one of her guns silenced, she stood out of the fight for a moment to regain breath. Neither of the enemy's cruisers followed, for both had had all they wanted. Fifty-five strenuous minutes, then, with the wreckage cleared away, the wounded carried below, and her guns again fit for action, the *Arethusa* came back for more. Into the haze she steamed once more, seeking her old opponents, and, having found them, redoubled her previous efforts. Very few minutes sufficed this time. One of the cruisers burst into flame, the other was visibly sinking. The *Arethusa* went on to seek some fresh encounter. Before her there appeared another larger

cruiser, and beyond this again big, dim shapes emerged from the harbour. But what was this behind her? Her old opponent in action again? What was it that the big German cruiser in front was turning to fight? A stray breath of wind disclosed the secret, and through the rift could be seen two more of the light cruiser Squadron, and behind them the immense forms of the big battle cruisers. But others had seen them besides the *Arethusa*. The dim shapes that had appeared from the island harbour had vanished again. Discretion was the better part of valour."

Further details of this wonderful fight are furnished by the Commodore. He tells us in the business-like way of the typical naval officer that the *Arethusa* received a heavy fire from two cruisers with two and four funnels respectively, now known to be the *Ariadne* and probably the *Strassburg*, in addition to several destroyers, from 7.57 A.M. until 8.15 A.M., when the *Strassburg* transferred her fire to the *Fearless*. "Close action was continued," we are told, "with the two-funnelled cruiser on converging courses until 8.25 A.M., when a 6-in. projectile from *Arethusa* wrecked the fore bridge of the enemy, who at once turned away in the direction of Heligoland, which was sighted slightly on the starboard bow at about the same time. All ships were at once ordered to turn to the westward, and shortly afterward speed was reduced to 20 knots. During the fight the

Arethusa had been hit many times, and was considerably damaged; only one 6-in. gun remained in action, all other guns and torpedo tubes having been temporarily disabled." Lieutenant Eric W. P. Westmacott, signal officer, had been killed at Commodore Tyrwhitt's side. Not the least heroic action was that of Chief Petty Officer F. W. Wrench, who extinguished "a terrific blaze" which set the deck on fire, the result of a shell exploding some ammunition. The Commodore showed the most extraordinary coolness. "A decent chap," says one of the gunners. "A real hero," remarks the leading signalman.

Meanwhile the British destroyers had also been in the thick of the fight and had sunk the leading destroyer of the enemy flotilla and damaged several others. Our boats had the advantage of more powerful guns than the German torpedo craft, which are armed with two 21-pr. quick-firers, four Maxims, and three or four torpedo tubes, but they also came under the fire of the forts and of the cruisers.

The *Liberty* went through a terrible ordeal. Part of the bridge was torn away by a shell which killed Lieutenant-Commander Nigel K. W. Barttelot and his signalman, shattered the foremast, and smashed the searchlight. Lieutenant Henry E. Horan thereupon took the officer's place, and "brought his ship out of action in an extremely able and gallant manner under most trying

conditions," the man at the wheel being Chief Petty Officer J. S. Beadle, who remained at his post for over an hour after he had been seriously wounded. Down below John Galvin, Stoker Petty Officer, and various members of the crew under the Engineer Officer went about their difficult business of stopping leaks, which were of such an alarming nature that most of the work was accomplished when the water had risen above the men's waists.

Three shells struck the *Laertes*, rendering a dynamo useless, wrecking the officers' cabin, and making a hole through the midship funnel. For a time she was hemmed in by two enemy vessels, and was finally towed out of action by the *Fearless*. Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Alexander Hill repaired the steering gear and engines under fire with as much coolness as if the boat were in dry dock, while Stoker Petty Officer Frederick Pierce showed wonderful presence of mind when a shell exploded in one of the boilers.

On the *Laurel* eleven casualties were caused by a single shell, her two funnels were pierced, and some of her deck gear was smashed. Further damage to the funnels caused the smoke to beat down, and enveloped one of the gun crews at a critical moment. Fortunately support from another craft came in the nick of time.

Commander Frank F. Rose, wounded in both legs, refused to delegate his duty to another until six

o'clock in the evening, and Leading Seaman Sam Palmer, severely wounded in one leg, continued to fight his gun until the order 'Cease fire' was given. A. E. Sellens, an Able Seaman, not only remained at his post when wounded in the arm, but rendered first aid to others before he would allow anybody to help him. An explosion occurred close to the centre gun, near which several lyddite shells were lying, but the promptness of Alfred Britton, Stoker Petty Officer, prevented the fire from spreading, and he eventually put it out. The explosion also shattered the after funnel and played havoc in one of the boiler-rooms, yet the men below stuck to their posts and did their best to repair the damage when the ship was brought out of action. The crews of the destroyers proved themselves worthy of the finest traditions of the service.

An engineer of the *Laurel* tells us what the engagement was from the point of view of the heroic 'black squad' in the engine-room. He says: "It was a terribly anxious time for us, as we stayed down there keeping the engines going at their top speed in order to cut off the Germans from their fleet. We could hear the awful din around and the scampering of the Tars on deck as they rushed about from point to point, and we knew what was to the fore when we caught odd glimpses of the stretcher-bearers with their ghastly burdens.

"We heard the shells crashing against the sides of

the ship or shrieking overhead as they passed harmlessly into the water, and we knew that at any moment one might strike us in a vital part and send us below for good. It is ten times harder on the men whose duty is in the engine-room than for those on deck taking part in the fighting, for they, at least, have the excitement of the fight, and if the ship is struck they have more than a sporting chance of escape. We have none."

One splendid performance stands out conspicuously. The *Defender*, after having put the finishing touch to V 187, lowered a whaler in the hope of being able to pick up survivors from the German commodore's ship. It had succeeded in hauling a number of them from the water when one of the enemy's cruisers chased the destroyer. She was no match for the ship at close range, and she was reluctantly compelled to abandon the boat. "The shots fell like hail all around us," is a seaman's description of the onslaught, and one of the whaler's crew asserts that about two hundred shells burst within twenty yards of rescuers and rescued. No damage was sustained, probably because the thick black smoke of the destroyers hung about the whaler on account of the stillness of the atmosphere and acted as a screen. The sea was exceptionally calm, but while this was cause for congratulation there seemed not the faintest ray of hope for the poor fellows, who were entirely at the mercy of the



The Battle of Heligoland Bight
NORMAN WILKINSON

enemy. "Imagine their feelings," suggests a lieutenant who fought in the battle of the Bight, "alone in an open boat without food, twenty-five miles from the nearest land, and that land the enemy's fortress, with nothing but fog and foes around them. Suddenly a whirl alongside, and up, if you please, pops his Britannic Majesty's submarine E 4, opens his conning tower, takes them all on board, shuts up again, dives, and brings them home 250 miles! Is that not magnificent? No novel would dare to face the critics with an episode like that in it, except perhaps Jules Verne; and all true!" As there was no room to accommodate the twenty-eight Germans, three only were taken prisoners, the others being allowed to make good their escape in the boat under the charge of an ober-lieutenant. They were provided with a compass, water, and biscuit.

The commander of the submarine, Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir, calmly standing at the periscope, had seen the sinking of V 187 and the dastardly attempt of the German cruiser on the rescue party. He attempted to attack the ship, but was foiled by a change of course before he was within range. After covering the retirement of the British destroyers he returned and performed the feat mentioned above.

By 10 A.M. the temporary disablement of the *Arethusa* had been remedied to some extent by

almost superhuman exertions on the part of her officers and crew, although her speed was considerably reduced by reason of a water tank having been hit. Why the enemy had not taken advantage of her stricken condition and annihilated her remains a secret of the German Navy. Providentially they left her to her own resources. The repairs were effected none too soon, for almost immediately Commodore Tyrwhitt received a wireless message from Commodore Keyes stating that the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake* were being chased by the *Mainz*, the *Köln*, and another cruiser. The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and the First Flotilla went to his assistance with right good-will. One of the cruisers on being attacked by gunfire and torpedoes disappeared in the mist, only to come round on another quarter about ten minutes later. The *Arethusa* and the *Fearless* again brought their armament to bear on her, and a torpedo attack was also made, but failed.

"We received a very severe and almost accurate fire from this cruiser," runs the official dispatch; "salvo after salvo was falling between ten and thirty yards short, but not a single shell struck; two torpedoes were also fired at us, being well directed, but short. The cruiser was badly damaged by *Arethusa's* 6-in. guns and a splendidly directed fire from *Fearless*, and she shortly afterward turned away in the direction of Heligoland."

A few minutes later the cruiser *Mainz* came into

view. The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and many destroyers seized on her with the avidity of hungry wolves. For nearly half an hour she endured their concentrated fire. According to an A.B. on the *Lydiard*, that ship succeeded in sending a well-directed torpedo into the enemy which tore an ugly, gaping wound in her side. The *Lydiard*, which was in the thick of the fight, escaped severe handling, although a shell burst just before the bridge. Meanwhile Commodore Tyrwhitt had sent a wireless to Admiral Beatty summing up the position of affairs, and just as the German cruiser was seen to be in flames and sinking by the bows the Light Cruiser Squadron appeared. The *Falmouth* and the *Nottingham* speedily decided the destiny of the *Mainz*. Every effort was now made to rescue the crew of the doomed cruiser.

"The fire amidships," relates an eye-witness, "had made two of the funnels red-hot and flames and smoke poured out of her. Her port side was like a sieve. Every gun was smashed and bent, some looking round corners, some on their sides—in fact her whole upper deck was chaos. The fore-bridge was a tangled mass of ironwork, while the wire stays from the foremast were swinging in the air. What she was like inside, heaven alone knows. We passed within a couple of hundred yards of her, and the only living beings on the upper deck were one man on the quarter-deck and what looked like a

couple of officers standing under what had been the fore-bridge. Many of them had jumped overboard, and, of course, were rescued, but these only totalled 7 officers and 79 men out of a crew of 400 or 500."

"We went alongside the *Mainz*," says a seaman on the *Lurcher*, "just before she sank, and it was an awful sight. We got 224 prisoners[1] in a most terrible state, and most of them died. Our decks were red with blood. All the Germans seemed quite happy when we got them on board. The worst job of all was getting them out of the sea. Some of them had legs and arms shot away, battered to pieces. I was in our boat just before their vessel sank, and there seemed to be many who were helpless on board her. The captain remained behind, having had both legs shot away." We have it on the evidence of another eye-witness that three British Royal Naval Reserve men, who had been working on a German liner when hostilities commenced, were rescued. They had been compelled to serve on the *Mainz*. One of the boats was already full up when the boatswain noticed two Germans clinging to a piece of wood. "We might manage to squeeze in one of these poor chaps," said the British sailor, "but we dare not risk both." Apparently the men understood. "Good-bye," muttered one of them, "I am nearly dead now, and useless, while you are

[1] Rear-Admiral A. H. Christian's report says 220.

well and strong. Let them take you, and I'll die." Then he let go and disappeared. When volunteers were asked to man the rescue boats from the *Falmouth* a stoker limped along the deck with a burnt leg. "That man cannot go," shouted an officer. "You don't pull an oar with your foot, sir," was the reply.

The *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla next proceeded to deal with the *Köln*. The First Battle Cruiser Squadron, consisting of the *Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, and *New Zealand*, which had been joined at sea by the *Invincible* and the destroyers *Hornet*, *Hydra*, *Tigress* and *Loyal*, now came on the scene. Every movement of the British squadrons seemed to be regulated with the precision of a well-rehearsed play, yet the final part of the programme had not been carried out without running considerable risks. Three enemy submarines had already attempted to torpedo some of the ships, and would probably have succeeded had their designs not been frustrated by rapid manœuvring that denoted superb seamanship. The decision to use the great cruisers was made by Sir David Beatty after he had carefully weighed up the likelihood of possible disaster from the operations of under-sea craft, mines, and of a sortie in force by the German Main Fleet. "Our high speed, however," says the Commander, "made submarine attack difficult, and the smoothness of the sea made their

detection comparatively easy. I considered that we were powerful enough to deal with any sortie except a Battle Squadron, which was unlikely to come out in time, provided our stroke was sufficiently rapid."

When Sir David Beatty caught the first glimpse of what was happening as he paced the bridge of the *Lion*, he noticed that the *Fearless* and the First Flotilla were retiring westward, the Light Cruiser Squadron was engaging the *Mainz*, and the *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla were still busy with the *Köln*. Steering in a direction that would enable him to cut the *Köln* from her base, the *Lion* gave chase, and set her on fire, the gunners scribbling on the shells, "One for the Kaiser," "Love from England," and suchlike pleasantries. The *Ariadne* now put in an appearance. Two salvos were sufficient to render the new-comer unseaworthy, but as floating mines had been reported on the course she was steering, the Admiral wisely forbore from following his beaten quarry. He again turned his attention to the *Köln*, giving her a couple of salvos from two turrets which sent her to Davy Jones's locker stern first. "She was game to the last, let it be said," asserts a gunroom officer, "her flag flying till she sank, her guns barking till they could bark no more." Another eye-witness states that just after receiving the first broadside the *Köln* half hauled down her ensign, then hoisted it again and opened fire. It seems reasonable to presume,

however, that the flag came down of its own accord and was readjusted. Not a soul was saved, although our destroyers raced to the spot in the hope of picking up possible survivors.

The battle of Heligoland Bight was over, and the first naval engagement of the Great War had conclusively proved the superiority of the British at sea. Lunch, we are informed by a facetious Tar, was served on the *Lion* at about two o'clock, and the stokers scrambled on deck for bits of shell to send to their relatives as souvenirs.

On their return northward the *Queen Mary* and the *Lowestoft* were unsuccessfully attacked by submarines, possibly those which had awaited their coming. The splendid fight of the *Arethusa*, and the heavy fire that she had endured had crippled her steaming capacity to such an extent that she could only travel at about six knots an hour. At 9.30 P.M. the *Hogue* took her in tow, Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson performing the task "in a most seamanlike manner," writes Commodore Tyrwhitt to the Admiralty, "and, observing that the night was pitch dark and the only lights showing were two small hand lanterns, I consider his action was one which deserves special notice from their Lordships." On arriving at the Nore the steel hawsers were cast off and the plucky and saucy *Arethusa* proceeded to Chatham under her own steam. There she was received with rousing cheers that must have heartened the battle-

stained sea-dogs as they stood by their disabled guns.

Perhaps the question that we most often ask ourselves on hearing of a naval fight is: How do the men feel when going into action? The sensation is usually one of tense anticipation not unmixed with a certain amount of nervousness, but when the engagement begins this entirely disappears. It is true reaction often comes afterward. For instance, a sailor who took part in the battle of Heligoland Bight asserts that throughout the fight the majority of the men working the gun at which he was stationed were laughing as though the grim business in hand was something thoroughly enjoyable. When it was over they cried like children.

The result of the battle, so far as the German mosquito craft were concerned, is thus summed up by the official Press Bureau:

"Although only two of the enemy's destroyers were actually observed to sink, most of the eighteen or twenty boats rounded up and attacked were well punished, and only saved themselves by scattered flight. The superior gun power and strength of the British destroyers, ship for ship, was conclusively demonstrated. The destroyers themselves did not hesitate to engage the enemy's cruisers, both with guns and torpedoes, with hardihood, and two of them, the *Laurel* and *Liberty*, got knocked about in the process" The complements of the five German



The Black Squad at Work

vessels sunk totalled some 1200 officers and men. With the exception of the 25 men who were set at liberty and about 300 prisoners, including the son of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, who were brought to land, the remainder perished. The total British casualties numbered 69 killed and wounded. It was afterward reported that seven enemy destroyers and torpedo boats put in at Kiel in a damaged condition, and that others had sunk near the entrance to the canal. Each of the British ships which took part in the action now have the words "Heligoland, August 28, 1914," painted in gold letters in a conspicuous place in commemoration of the event. The *Arethusa* bears a brass plate on which are engraved two verses of the old song by P. Hoare. The first verse is as follows :—

Come, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,
While English glory I unfold—
Huzza to the Arethusa!
She's a frigate tight and brave
As ever stemm'd the dashing wave:
Her men are staunch
To their fav'rite launch,
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike, we'll all expire,
On board the Arethusa.

A young hero of the Bight was so seriously injured that it was decided to amputate the left limb just below the knee. It was deemed wiser not to

tell him the nature of the operation until all was over, when the chaplain was deputed to break the news.

"The left leg is it, sir?" queried the patient. "Ah, well, I had a couple of nasty corns on that foot!"

CHAPTER V

THE EXPLOITS OF A MODERN CORSAIR

ON the 6th August 1914 there slipped out of the harbour of Tsingtau a certain German light cruiser of 3650 tons. Her name, it is safe to say, was then quite unknown to the world outside of naval circles. On the 9th of the following November she was rounded up by H.M.A.S. *Sydney* and beached and burnt on North Keeling Island. During the intervening three months the extraordinary exploits of H.I.G.M.S. *Emden* had amazed newspaper readers of both hemispheres, annoyed excessively the commanding officers of various Australian, British, French, Russian, and Japanese men-of-war, whose vigilance she had eluded, tried the nerves of shipowners whose vessels plied in Eastern waters, and plundered the pockets of many an underwriter, although her commander received not a little admiration from all concerned. A Briton appreciates a sportsman even though he be an enemy, and Captain Karl Von Müller 'played the game' as an officer and a gentleman.

In addition to being a skilful seaman, Müller, who is a native of Blankenburg, in the duchy of Brunswick, possessed a fund of robust humour which

stood him in good stead, for he frankly admitted on more than one occasion that he was well aware that a long career was not to be expected. It was a clear case of 'a short life and a merry one,' as subsequent events proved. In one respect he was greatly favoured by fortune. He had on board a certain Lieutenant Meyer, who had served in Hamburg-Amerika liners running to India, and whose knowledge of the waters must have helped very considerably.

It has also been suggested that Müller may have studied to advantage the career of Robert Surcouf, who performed many feats as a privateer in the Indian seas. Surcouf, however, usually turned his prizes into cash by sending them into Mauritius, which then belonged to the French, whereas Müller had no advantage of the kind open to him.

The way in which the *Emden* managed to get away from the neighbourhood of Tsingtau, the seaport of the German settlement of Kiao-Chau, on the Yellow Sea, reads like an extract from one of the chapters of Max Pemberton's well-known *Iron Pirate*. The story, as based on the narrative of Meyer, is this. In the immediate vicinity was a Japanese armoured cruiser which was a most inconvenient neighbour to have. The *Emden* was therefore painted the colour of vessels of the British Navy. Then at the suggestion of the chief engineer, who entered into the spirit of the great

adventure in the schoolboy fashion of the captain, a dummy funnel was rigged up. The addition of a White Ensign at the stern completed her disguise so far as it was possible to do so. The question was whether the officers of the aforementioned cruiser would notice anything suspicious. Seeing that they were not British, and consequently less familiar with the lines of the light cruisers of our Navy, there was just a chance that the transformed *Emden* would escape.

The bluff worked admirably. As the *Emden* steamed past the cruiser the gallant little Japanese lined the decks and the ensigns of each were duly dipped, as custom and international courtesy ordain. The Germans even ventured on giving three British cheers. Then the *Emden* gradually receded in the distance and disappeared. For six weeks she was completely lost. During that time lack of news gave ample scope for rumour. It was asserted that the *Emden* had been in action with the Russian cruiser *Askold*, and that both had sunk as a result. In these things Rumour lied.

During the three months of her feverish existence as a commerce raider, comparable in some degree with that of the *Alabama* of American Civil War fame, the *Emden* captured or sunk ships and cargoes calculated to be worth somewhere between £2,000,000 and £4,000,000 sterling. Her victims numbered twenty-three, including a Russian cruiser

and a French torpedo boat destroyer. She must have travelled many thousands of miles during her 'crowded hour of glorious life.' More than once she was sighted by British cruisers, but on each occasion her speed of 24 knots enabled her to escape. Napoleon believed that war should support war; Captain Von Müller either had to enforce the principle or perish. With her bunkers crammed to their utmost capacity, the *Emden* could only take 850 tons of coal, and her crew of 361 officers and men had to be fed. Now it is fairly obvious that she could not afford to be sparing of her use of motive power, because speed was her greatest asset, and it was impossible for her to carry sufficient provisions to last for the three months she was at liberty. Consequently war *had* to support war. Müller and his merry men had to live on their captives.

This modern Corsair was a sister ship of the *Dresden*, of which more later, and was launched and completed in 1909 at Danzig dockyard. For a vessel of her size her armament was good, for she carried ten 4·1-in. quick-firers, eight 5-pr. guns, and two submerged torpedo tubes. Her protection was a 2-in. steel deck over the boiler and engine spaces. Seen from a distance she looked like a travelling factory, for her funnels were very tall.

To scour the seas for this very modern and substantial *Flying Dutchman* was an exceedingly

difficult matter, and the fact that she disappeared for weeks together is no reflection on those whose duty it was to destroy her. Compared with the immense area to be covered, the North Sea was a mere lake, and the sheltered bays and islets in which she could hide were many and varied.

She tapped wireless messages, thus securing information of the utmost service to her, and it has been suggested that she also received help from certain German Protestant Missions in Southern India or the Western Ghauts, and the island of Pulo Weh, north of Sumatra. A small German sailing vessel called the *Comet*, captured by the Australian Navy, was found to have a complete wireless telegraph installation on board which it is quite possible assisted the *Emden*. She used her own apparatus to good effect by sending out calls which lured British merchantmen to their doom.

The *Emden's* preliminary depredations took place in the Bay of Bengal between the 10th and 14th of September, when she sank five vessels varying from 3544 tons to 7615 tons which had set out from the Hugli, and captured a sixth, the *Kabinga*. It is significant that it was generally understood that transports with the Indian contingent on board would leave about this time.

Karl Von Müller carried out his warfare in no cold-blooded-murder fashion. The crews of the unfortunate ships were always allowed to take to the

boats, or some other suitable provision was made for their safety, and they were invariably treated in a courteous way. On this particular occasion, or rather series of occasions, the sixth vessel was released because the captain's wife was on board, and Müller had not the heart to send a woman off in an open boat in rough weather.

This, at any rate, was the explanation made by the gallant Müller. According to the lady most concerned, when a shot was fired across the vessel's bows it was thought that the pursuing vessel was a British cruiser. The captain and his wife were made prisoners and thirty men stationed on the *Kabinga*. She was compelled to follow in the track of the German warship for forty-eight hours, and was then released. "The German officers treated us well, and were gentlemen," says the witness. In the interim the Harrison liner *Diplomat*, on her homeward voyage to Liverpool, had also been sighted by the *Emden* and forced to stop, the passengers being removed to the *Kabinga*, with those of the other ships. Five shots were fired at the *Diplomat*, and eventually she disappeared from mortal ken, plunging bows forward into the deep.

"The German commander," writes the captain of the *Kabinga* in his official report, "warned me to approach the Hugli with caution, as the pilots were off station, the lightships and buoys removed,

he having heard Calcutta giving the pilot these instructions by wireless. My wireless installation was wrecked as soon as I was captured, but they overlooked the fact that we had spare wire on board for new aerials, and that the installations worked from the ship's dynamo. They threw the accumulators away, thinking the Marconi set was then finished. We rigged new wires as soon as possible, and the Marconi operators repaired the machinery, and on the 15th I got into communication with Calcutta." Upon arrival at that port the *Kabinga* had some four hundred souls aboard.

The next victim was the liner *Clan Matheson*, which was sunk a few days after the encounter with the *Kabinga*.

The enterprising commander of the *Emden* now varied his adventures by shelling Madras, the only city of importance on the east coast of India that lay open to him. Like the raids on Yarmouth and Hartlepool, it was a case of doing the maximum of damage in the minimum of time, because of the possibility of the naval hounds catching the naval hare. Still Captain von Müller showed considerable intrepidity in steaming under cover of night into the roads, finding the position of the great oil tanks with the aid of his searchlights, and coolly bombarding the city for a quarter of an hour. Apparently the main idea was to shell the tanks in the hope that the blazing liquid would escape and set fire to the

adjacent buildings, thus involving the capital of the presidency.

The first two shells struck the steamer *Chupra*, a vessel of 6175 tons owned by the British Indian Steam Navigation Company, which happened to be directly in the line of fire. The third shell hit the bungalow of the manager of the Burma Oil Company, and wrecked a bedroom. Fortunately the family got away, although they narrowly escaped death from another shell that burst near them, killing the Durwan. Another fell near a native policeman, and so great was the concussion that his body was subsequently recovered from the harbour. A poor little child walking by the side of the tramway was killed by a fragment of shell, and the surgical ward of the Varendas Hospital was struck. An iron bogie wagon near by was so punctured by splinters of flying steel that it looked like a giant sieve on wheels, and the telegraph office and the Seamen's Club House were also hit. By this time two of the huge kerosene oil tanks were alight, but by great good fortune those containing petrol were missed, otherwise a most disastrous tragedy would have ensued. The guns of Fort George opened against the hostile ship, but certainly failed to do material damage to her. In the circumstances the work of the gun-layers on the *Emden* was excellent. Very soon the buildings of the city stood up like gaunt ghosts as the lurid flames, fed by one million and a half gallons of oil,

reached higher and higher until they were visible for a hundred miles, and above all rolled a dense black cloud that slowly coiled up from the blazing tanks and formed a mammoth drop curtain. According to one correspondent there was no commotion in Madras, while another has it that there was "frightful excitement" on the part of the natives, many of whom fled from what they doubtless regarded as a doomed city. Others, whose curiosity got the better of fear, lined the beach and coolly watched the flash of the guns from the fort and the ship. In fifteen minutes the *Emden* managed to do £50,000 worth of damage.

The bombardment of Madras took place on the 22nd of September. On the following day information was received of the occurrence by H.M.S. *Hampshire*. On the 25th, when the same cruiser was nearing Madras, she ascertained that the enemy was off the French settlement of Pondicherry. Here also she fired a few shots, and yet again Dame Fortune favoured her, for the *Hampshire* arrived off the port just two hours after the will-o'-the-wisp of the Indian Ocean had left. That the cruiser only just missed her quarry is proved by the statement of the captain of one of the prizes, who was informed that on one occasion the commanding officer of the *Emden* ascertained by means of wireless messages that the *Hampshire* was eight miles distant.

Looking for the proverbial needle in a pottle of

hay was mere child's play compared to the task of the Allied commanders, particularly as it was the season of the mist-making monsoon. "We have been right south in the heat, and now we are shivering," writes a bugler in a British cruiser which missed the *Emden* by a matter of ten miles. On this occasion, and in company with two other ships, a bold attempt was made to come within range of the rover. Everything was going well when a fog came on, and that was the end of the chase. On this particular occasion the fugitive was accompanied by three colliers.

In the last week of September half a dozen vessels aggregating over 24,000 tons fell to the prowess of the intrepid Müller. Of these, four were sent to the bottom of the Indian Ocean, one was released for the purpose of taking the crews of the others to Colombo, and a collier was retained for fairly obvious reasons. Fortunately three of the prizes were in ballast, but another, the *Tymeric*, was making her way from Java to Falmouth with a valuable cargo of sugar.

Previous to their release the officers and men of the captured ships were treated with much kindness on board the *Emden*. No lights were allowed in their cabins at night—a wise precaution to prevent the possibility of signalling—but the men were given opportunities for recreation during the day. A steward apologized for bringing pancakes and

ham for breakfast, and the prisoners were further regaled with a performance of the band on Sunday.

The usual procedure adopted in securing her prey was to signal 'Stop' and then to send an armed crew aboard. After examining the ship's paper, the vessel was searched for provisions and any articles that the *Emden* happened to be requiring. Sometimes the crew were given ten minutes to get their belongings together, occasionally half an hour. "It is the fortune of war, captain," was the apology of the officer who boarded the s.s. *Riberia* a couple of hundred miles west of Colombo. Another officer expressed the hope that when the *Emden* was captured it would be by a British ship. "But we shall run," he declared; "we are not built for fighting." The captain was very sparing of his torpedoes, and usually sent his captures to Davy Jones's locker by placing mines in them and opening the sea-cocks. The treatment was always effective. "The vessel's sides were blown out," says Captain D. Harris of the *King Lud*, whose ship was destroyed by the former method.

It must not be inferred that the raider captured every ship plying on the trade route. She missed several very rich prizes, including a Brocklebank liner. Captain Giacapello, of the Italian steamer *Loredano*, was stopped by the raider, and when released he at once warned several ships and transports, thus enabling them to escape. For the

services thus rendered Captain Giacapello was presented with a gold watch and chain by Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal, mementoes were also given to the officers of his ship and cash rewards to the crew.

A remarkable escape was that of the French Messageries Maritimes steamer *Paul Lecat.* She received a wireless telling her to change her course and steam in a given direction so as to avoid meeting the German cruiser. Owing to a slight error in the signal the captain was suspicious and proceeded on his way. Had he heeded the instruction he would have fallen into the *Emden's* trap.

On or about the 15th of October H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, commanded by Captain Henry L. Cochrane, captured two of the raider's colliers, the *Markomannia* and the *Pontoporos*, the former a Hamburg-Amerika liner of 4504 tons, and the latter a Greek vessel of 4049 tons, off the Sumatra coast, but again the elusive *Emden* escaped.

Five days later seven more vessels fell into her net, including a second steamer of the Clan Line and a poor little dredger of 473 tons that was laboriously making her way to Tasmania. Three of these prizes were brand-new ships, and only two of the seven were allowed to remain afloat—namely, the *Exford* of 4542 tons and the *Saint Egbert* of 5596 tons. It was a rich haul, particularly as the former was carrying a cargo of the best Welsh

steam coal for British warships, but the victims were destined to be the last of the ships flying the red ensign that were to fall prey to the *Emden*. One does not expect to meet an old friend by being made prisoner, but two sailors who had lived at Four Crosses, near Pwllheli, Wales, were taken out of separate prizes and met for the first time for several years on board the corsair. Yet again the old saying, "It's an ill wind . . ." was found not to be at fault.

Having rigged up the *Emden's* dummy funnel once more, and made one or two other disguises, von Müller prepared for a yet greater effort. He determined to make a raid on Penang, one of the colonies of the Straits Settlements. This port was used as a base by H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, and although he does not appear to have hoped that the *Emden* would be mistaken for that vessel, the disguise was so clever that an observer on the shore candidly admitted that he was deceived and thought it was the British cruiser. The time chosen by von Müller was the breaking of dawn, when there was just enough light for him to see what he was doing and probably insufficient for the patrol ships on the watch to distinguish his real nationality. It was not a last desperate throw of the dice, but rather a carefully calculated plan that the gods might favour. Boldness was essential, and that had ever been associated with the Captain's strategy.

So far as we are able to ascertain, a Russian cruiser, a small French gunboat and two or three destroyers were lying in the roadstead. The *Emden* managed to get past the patrol boats, which took her for a vessel belonging to the Allied Fleets. The light cruiser, rushing along at great speed, approached close to the Russian *Zhemtchug*, a third-class armoured cruiser of 3130 tons built at Petrograd in 1904 and armed with half a dozen 4·7-in. quick-firing guns. According to the scanty official report of the Russian Admiralty, which tallies with a log kept by one of the German petty officers, the *Emden* opened fire with a torpedo which exploded near the *Zhemtchug's* bow, and on the latter bringing her guns into action a second torpedo sank the ship. Mr Harry Picken, an engineer on the steamer *Nigaristan*, which was lying in the harbour, positively asserts that two broadsides were fired into the cruiser that was taken at such grave disadvantage, and that the second broadside exploded the magazines. The evidence of another witness is to the same effect. "The enemy poured in a continuous rain of shell," are his words, "but the reply from the Russian was slow and apparently inaccurate. Time after time we saw flashes of fire on the deck and side of the first (*Zhemtchug*), presumably caused by the bursting of shells; the other boat was, so far as we could see, untouched." The Russian report makes no mention of the gun-fire of the *Emden*, whereas

the German officer says that salvo after salvo—in all 100 shots—were hurled at the vessel, which testifies to the terrible pommeling that the *hemtchug* received.

On the *Emden's* return to the open sea the French destroyer *Mousquet*, which was on patrol duty, attempted to grapple with her. The *Mousquet* put up a gallant fight, and continued firing until she was sunk by the more powerful vessel. A shell that exploded on the bridge shot away both legs or Captain Therionne, who ordered his men to lash him to the deck and continued to command his little vessel. Thirty-six survivors were picked up by the *Emden's* boats, but three were so badly wounded that they died shortly afterward. Of the 250 officers and men saved from the Russian cruiser no fewer than 112 were wounded, and 85 of the crew perished. Not a few men owed their lives to the daring of a sergeant of volunteers, who was in bed when the *Emden* steamed into the roadstead and was awakened by the firing. He speedily made his way to the point where a little ferry-boat plies. Jumping on board, he forced the Malay steersman at the point of the bayonet to change his usual route and make for the place where the Russian cruiser had gone down. The boat was by no means speedy, but the Chinese firemen were threatened with drastic measures if they did not get to the spot in time. This they succeeded in doing, and many wounded

men, more dead than alive, were dragged on board the ferry and taken to land.

Extraordinary heroism was shown by Engineer-Lieutenant Geebner. When the magazine of the *Zhemtchug* exploded he was hurled into the water, but on coming to the surface saw two poor fellows whose legs had been blown off. Having rescued them, he returned again and again and saved several more sailors from drowning. Having satisfied himself that he could be of no further service in the water, he swam to the jetty and quietly proceeded to muster what remained of the crew. We have all read and heard of the superb stoicism of the Russians, but were it not stated on credible authority it would be difficult to believe that every one of the sailors who were surgically treated refused to take an anæsthetic, although some of the wounds were of the most terrible description.

The chase of the *Emden* was continued by a second destroyer after the sinking of the *Mousquet*. The light cruiser, however, soon outdistanced her pursuer.

The British Embassy at Tokio afterward received an account stating that the raider was flying the Japanese flag, the French Minister of Marine gave out that she was displaying the Russian flag, while the *Matin* newspaper stated that although she appeared before Penang with the latter ensign she afterward hoisted her national colours. It makes

little difference which flag was at the mast-head on her approach, provided she lowered it and substituted her own before opening fire. Such a ruse is perfectly legitimate. We may be reasonably certain that the black and white cross and Prussian eagle were shown, for von Müller never indulged in mean tactics. He gained his reward, being given the Iron Cross of the first and second class, while all the other officers and fifty of the petty officers and men were awarded the same distinction of the second class.

The strain on the nerves of a commander who knows that his ship must be destroyed sooner or later, that every day may be his last and is certainly bringing him appreciably nearer to the inevitable finish, must be well-nigh intolerable. Yet we find the inexhaustible fund of humour bubbling up in Captain von Müller as it did in M. Adolphe Max, the Burgomaster of Brussels. For instance, great was the surprise of the wireless operator of H.M.S. *Yarmouth* to receive a call from the *Emden* one night while the British cruiser was engaged in escorting a ship from Singapore, which is at the extreme end of the Malay Peninsula, Penang being on the west coast. "Captain von Müller and the ward-room mess," ticked the instrument, "present their compliments, and would be obliged if the *Yarmouth* would let them have the result of the inter-regimental Rugby football match."

As was only to be expected, for Jack Tar keenly

appreciates a joke, the result was duly sent across the intervening waters. Moreover, the message was concluded with the intimation that soon British sportsmen in the East would have the pleasure of the company of the captain of the *Emden* at all field and track events. By this time many stories had gathered about Karl von Müller. One had it that he had wirelessed to the pilot brig at the mouth of the Hugli that he would be delighted to carry the mails; another told how he had asked the commander of a vessel if he had heard anything of the *Emden*, and on being replied to in the negative answered: "Well, I am it."

Shortly after his visit to Penang Captain von Müller, so the tale goes, called at Diego Garcia, one of the Chagos Islands and a British possession. Very few people live there, the total population numbering about 540 people, of whom the odd forty are Europeans. Von Müller had two urgent necessities —namely, the taking in of coal and the removal of weeds and barnacles. The Englishman who interrogated the Captain as to his *bona fides* was told that the *Emden* was carrying out manœuvres with the British Navy, which was perfectly true up to a certain point. There was a display of good-will on either side, and as no one on the island was aware of the outbreak of war, no attempt was made to enlighten them. Von Müller merely vouchsafed the information that the Pope was dead. As Pius X. had

breathed his last on the 20th of the previous August this was not particularly up-to-date news. However, it sufficed. When asked about British politics von Müller adopted the official attitude by answering courteously but evasively.

On hearing that the motor boat of the gentleman in question had broken down, the German commander at once sent a couple of engineers to repair it. The natives made his ship almost as bright as a new pin, coal was secured, and Captain von Müller showed his gratitude by paying for the labour involved and saying that he would be delighted to forward the delivery of any letters that might be entrusted to him. The Englishman then sent on board a bottle of wine and a box of cigars, doubtless thinking that he was not only giving pleasure to the recipient, but aiding the worthy cause of international brotherhood. With a farewell salute of her guns the *Emden* went on her way, and a little group of Imperialists stood and watched her as she receded in the blue distance.

CHAPTER VI

ROUNDING-UP THE ELUSIVE *EMDEN*

AFTER her daring and dramatic coup at Penang, involving the loss of two war vessels, the *Emden* again disappeared for a time. It was her last raid and her final victory. Von Müller was to prove the truth of Napoleon's saying : " There is but one step between triumph and ruin." For the tide of success had turned. British, French, Russian, and Japanese cruisers were busy 'sweeping' the sea, an immense area it is true, but scarcely too vast to defeat the methodical plan pursued by the combined fleets. It was therefore evident that at no very distant date the *Emden* must be cornered. To which Navy should fall the honour of ending her career would be decided rather by fortune than by tactics. As we shall see, the rounding-up of the *Emden* was actually achieved when the 'sweeping' operations had been temporarily suspended in order to convoy transports.

" We need patience," wrote a philosophical sailor of H.M.S. *Hampshire*, who had not set foot on land for two months after leaving Hakodate, in Japan, and had chased " half round Asia " in pursuit of the German corsair. The *Emden* was not to fall to the

Hampshire. She was, however, within an ace of being caught by the Japanese. One night, when the Australian and New Zealand contingents were only some fifty miles off Cocos Keeling Island, a message was received from our Eastern Allies warning the convoy that the enemy was in the vicinity. Every member of the Expeditionary Force on the armada of transports was ordered to don a life-belt and line up on deck. The boats were swung out on the davits for instant service. Ammunition was served out to the guard. The cruisers cleared for action, the transports were ready with their light artillery to lend a hand should opportunity come, and one army officer erected a little barricade of sacks of flour and placed a Maxim gun behind it. His idea was that if the *Emden* came sufficiently close he might have an opportunity of raking the bridge. The lightning which flashed across the dark and sullen waters afforded the men a momentary gleam, Nature thereby disobeying the order of 'Lights out.' Yet it revealed nothing but sea and ships—their own ships. It was not an enviable experience, especially as the troops discarded every shred of clothing other than their trousers. Not one of them knew whether it would be the solitary *Emden* or von Spee's Pacific Squadron that might appear any minute, but each cordially wished the disturbers of their peace at the bottom of the sea.

While they were standing thus, the silence

broken only by the monotonous churning of the screws and the sough of the sea, the dull roar of a distant gun was heard. There suddenly shot out of the darkness the still darker forms of three cruisers racing under forced draught in the direction from whence the low, reverberating boom had come. The tension was appalling even to men who knew not fear, for a soldier likes to get to grips with his enemy. It lasted until the first streaks of dawn stole across the sky. "Joy cometh in the morning"; it was noised abroad that the elusive *Emden* was being chased by the wily *Sydney*. When it was known that the German corsair had at last met her doom, a holiday was proclaimed throughout the fleet.

It was then, and not till then, that the full significance of the Australian Navy was realized by those on board the transports. A few days later every thinking citizen of the British Empire praised the foresight of the colonial statesmen who had realized the immense importance of Sea Power to the great southern continent.

It was only so recently as 1909 that the Commonwealth had determined to have a fleet, which included in August 1914 one large battle cruiser, four light cruisers, six destroyers, and two submarines. The wisdom of this decision was demonstrated by the splendid part played by these vessels in the opening phase of the World War. In addition to cornering the *Emden*, capturing German

merchant ships, and assisting in destroying enemy wireless stations, the Australian Navy took part in the search for von Spee's squadron.

Other important work which will doubtless have far-reaching consequences was accomplished by the capture of various 'places in the sun' on which the German Emperor set such store. Following the seizure of the island of Nauru, the *Australia* and the *Melbourne* helped to convoy the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to Samoa, the lovely group of volcanic islands known as 'the gem of the Pacific,' and so long a bone of contention between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. Lack of men precluding any idea of defence, the enemy surrendered without bloodshed. The bluejackets landed at Apia, the last home of Robert Louis Stevenson, on the 30th of August. On the next day, a little over fourteen years following the hoisting of the German colours, the Union Jack waved over the buildings of the late Imperial Government. This gave intense satisfaction to every son of Britain in the Commonwealth, for all were firmly convinced that when the Motherland renounced her claim to the islands in 1899 she committed a grave error of judgment. That blunder was now wiped off the slate.

Attention was next paid to the Bismarck Archipelago, which has an area of nearly 20,000 square miles. The preliminary operations began on the

11th of September, when a little band of twenty-five men set out to destroy a wireless station on the island of Neu Pommern (late New Britain). They were met by Germans and natives cleverly hidden in cocoanut-palm trees, who drove them back, after killing an officer of the Army Medical Corps and a naval petty officer. A force six times as large was next landed near Herbertshöhe under Commander J. A. H. Beresford. In proceeding," " says the Admiralty dispatch, " its progress was stoutly opposed, and the party had to fight their way for four miles through the bush, the road being in many places mined." Half a dozen Germans and a number of natives had sought to protect the wireless station by digging themselves in. The colonials advanced without the slightest hesitation and charged with great gallantry, but it was not until late afternoon that the enemy surrendered.

" We found," says Commander Beresford, " that Herbertshöhe was splendidly prepared for defence. They had had two months to get ready, and their trenches and defences were in ideal positions. If the positions had been reversed, and we had been the defenders, Herbertshöhe would still be fighting. I don't think any force in the world could shift British defenders from such a position as the German officers and native troops had provided.

" We had taken the first line of trenches and advanced upon the second when a flag of truce

appeared, and a German officer with an orderly came up to ask me what terms he could get for surrender. The orderly acted as an interpreter. I have since found out that the German officer understands English as well as I do myself. I had already written out the terms—unconditional surrender of all forces and arms. There was forty minutes' parleying, with altogether too much German for me. At last I pulled out my watch and gave him five minutes to sign 'Surrender.' I like that man. He's one of the coolest soldiers I've ever met. He talked German to his interpreter for exactly four minutes, and then he signed 'Surrender.'" Rabaul, the capital, was occupied without difficulty, but at Toma, in the mountains, the Germans did not propose to give in so easily. One of the warships therefore shelled the position, in much the same way as the British squadron paved the way for the landing of troops in Gallipoli. The advance of the troops was made under a blazing sun which added immeasurably to the difficulties of the march, but on storming the trenches it was found that the enemy had vacated them. Shortly afterward a white flag was shown and the Germans surrendered. Before steaming into Rabaul harbour, it was supposed that four German cruisers were there coaling, and the *Sydney* therefore prepared to dash in under cover of night and torpedo them. It was afterward ascertained that the ships had left the day before. In the last week of

September the town and harbour of Friedrich Wilhelm, the seat of Government of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, German New Guinea, was occupied, and Germany was deprived of yet another 'place in the sun.'

In this part of the world civilization has made comparatively little progress. The natives are still addicted to occasional bouts of cannibalism, and had been informed by their European allies that if the British landed they would eat them. They were armed with mauser rifles and fired murderous dum-dum bullets. The 'money' used among themselves is shells threaded on split cane. In their dealings with white men they barter cocoanuts, copra, mother-of-pearl and tortoise-shell for tobacco.

Again the apparently endless search of the vast Pacific was recommenced. Sometimes suspicious-looking smoke would be seen on the horizon, but never a sight of the quarry, and occasionally the wireless would catch German messages. After running many thousands of miles, the Australian Fleet was ordered south to take part in the task of convoying the patriotic colonists who had so whole-heartedly rallied to the Empire's call. Perhaps the activities of the fleet may be better appreciated by the reader when he is told that after four months' work the men were given four hours' leave.

At this point we again come in touch with the *Emden*, one of whose officers subsequently stated that

no one on board had the least idea that transports were in the vicinity, so well had the authorities guarded the secret of their movements. First of all let us read the official report of Captain John C. T. Glossop, of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, who was well acquainted with southern waters. As a midshipman he had experienced the terrible hurricane at Apia in 1889, and played his part in the splendid seamanship which enabled H.M.S. *Calliope* to escape from the harbour and ride the gale in the open sea. That was not his last unpleasant experience at Samoa, for a decade later he served throughout the troubles brought about by the chief Mataafa, abetted by the Germans. He was then a lieutenant in the *Royalist*. That ship is no longer to be found in the "Navy List," although her name has been passed on to a more modern vessel. The *Sydney*, it should be noted, is a light cruiser of 5400 tons, with a speed of 25·5 knots, an armament of eight 6-in. guns, four 3-pr. quick-firing guns, and two submerged torpedo tubes. Her turbines develop 22,000 horse-power, and she was completed at Birkenhead in 1912.

"1. Whilst on escort duty with the convoy under the charge of Captain Silver, H.M.A.S. *Melbourne*, at 6.30 A.M. on Monday, 9th November," says Captain Glossop, "a wireless message from Cocos was heard reporting that a foreign warship was off the entrance. I was ordered to raise steam for full speed at 7.0 A.M., and proceed thither. I worked

up to 20 knots, and at 9.15 A.M. sighted land ahead and almost immediately the smoke of a ship which proved to be H.I.G.M.S. *Emden* coming out toward me at a great rate. At 9.40 A.M. fire was opened, she firing the first shot. I kept my distance as much as possible to obtain the advantage of my guns. Her fire was very accurate and rapid to begin with, but seemed to slacken very quickly, all casualties occurring in this ship almost immediately. First the foremost funnel of her went, secondly the foremast, and she was badly on fire aft, then the second funnel went, and lastly the third funnel, and I saw she was making for the beach on North Keeling Island, where she grounded at 11.20 A.M. I gave her two more broadsides and left her to pursue a merchant ship which had come up during the action.

"2. Although I had guns on this merchant ship at odd times during the action I had not fired, and as she was making off fast I pursued and overtook her at 12.10, firing a gun across her bows, and hoisting International Code Signal to stop, which she did. I sent an armed boat and found her to be the s.s. *Buresk*, a captured British collier with 18 Chinese crew, 1 English steward, 1 Norwegian cook, and a German prize crew of 3 officers, 1 warrant officer and 12 men. The ship unfortunately was sinking, the Kingston valve knocked out and damaged to prevent repairing, so I took all on board, fired

four shells into her, and returned to the *Emden*, passing men swimming in the water, for whom I left two boats I was towing from the *Buresk*.

"3. On arriving again off the *Emden* she still had her colours up at mainmast head. I inquired by signal, International Code, 'Will you surrender?' and received a reply in Morse 'What signal? No signal books.' I then made in Morse 'Do you surrender?' and subsequently 'Have you received my signal?' to neither of which did I get an answer. The German officers on board gave me to understand that the captain would never surrender, and therefore, though very reluctantly, I again fired at her at 4.30 P.M., ceasing at 4.35, as she showed white flags and hauled down her ensign by sending a man aloft.

"4. I then left the *Emden* and returned and picked up the *Buresk's* two boats, rescuing two sailors (5.0 P.M.) who had been in the water all day. I returned and sent in one boat to the *Emden*, manned by her own prize crew from the *Buresk*, and one officer, and stating I would return to their assistance next morning.

"5. I lay on and off all night and communicated with Direction Island at 8.0 A.M., 10th November, to find that the *Emden's* party, consisting of 3 officers and 40 men, 1 launch and two cutters, had seized and provisioned a 70 tons schooner (the *Ayesha*) having four Maxims with two belts to each. They left the previous night at six o'clock. The

wireless station was entirely destroyed, one cable cut, one damaged, and one intact. I borrowed a doctor and two assistants, and proceeded as fast as possible to the *Emden's* assistance.

"6. I sent an officer on board to see the Captain, and in view of the large number of prisoners and wounded and lack of accommodation, etc., in this ship, and the absolute impossibility of leaving them where they were, he agreed that if I received his officers and men and all wounded 'then as for such time as they remained in the *Sydney* they would cause no interference with ship or fittings, and would be amenable to the ship's discipline.' I therefore set to work at once to tranship them—a most difficult operation, the ships being on weather side of Island and the send alongside very heavy. The conditions in the *Emden* were indescribable. I received the lats from her at 5.6 P.M., then had to go round to the lee-side to pick up 20 more men who had managed to get ashore from the ship.

"7. Darkness came on before this could be accomplished, and the ship again stood off and on all night, renewing operations at 5 A.M. on 11th November, a cutter's crew having to land with stretchers to bring wounded round to embarking point. A German officer, a doctor, died ashore the previous day. The ship in the meantime ran over to Direction Island to return their doctor and assistants, send cables, and was back again at

10 A.M., embarked the remainder of wounded, and proceeded for Colombo by 10.35 A.M., Wednesday, 11th November.

"8. Total casualties in the *Sydney*: Killed, 3; severely wounded (since dead) 1; severely wounded, 4; wounded, 4; slightly wounded, 4. In the *Emden* I can only approximately state the killed at 7 officers and 108 men from Captain's statement. I had on board 11 officers, 9 warrant officers, and 191 men, of whom 3 officers and 53 men were wounded, and of this number 1 officer and 3 men have since died of wounds.

"9. The damage to the *Sydney's* hull and fittings was surprisingly small; in all about ten hits seem to have been made. The engine and boiler rooms and funnels escaped entirely.

"10. I have great pleasure in stating that the behaviour of the ship's company was excellent in every way, and with such a large proportion of young hands and people under training it is all the more gratifying."

An official document does not give much scope for romance, but there is plenty in connexion with the destruction of the *Emden*. Captain Glossop, for instance, makes no reference in his dispatch, as published, to the splendid work of the cable operators of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Singapore and on Cocos Island.

Early on the morning of the 9th November the

operator at Singapore was in communication with Cocos Island. Everything was working well, when the dull monotony of gathering more or less uninteresting information was broken by the receipt of a sentence of half a dozen words that were destined to have far-reaching consequences. The message ran : "*Emden* at Cocos landing armed party." Then the instrument was silent, and although the operator at Singapore endeavoured to get more news there was no response. Evidently there was a 'break,' or the cable had been cut, or something tragic had happened to the man at the other end. An old mirror instrument was set working some hours later, and brought a reply from the island. Then the dread secret of the silence was revealed. "Been unable to communicate. Everything smashed. No light. Will get an instrument up at daylight. Report us all well. *Emden* engaged by British cruiser. Result unknown. Landing party commandeered schooner *Ayesha*. Good-night."

When the *Emden* was sighted off the island the telegraph staff at once suspected a visit from the celebrated corsair, of which they had heard a great deal but had never seen. The dummy funnel which had been so exceedingly useful proved to be her undoing. Somehow or other on this particular occasion it did not look the part. It appeared to be rather a product of the carpenter's craft than of the engineer's skill. More significant still, no ensign

was visible. With praiseworthy promptitude one of the assistants at once sent by wireless a signal of distress and brief particulars of the cause in the hope that a naval ship might pick it up, while another man dispatched the message given above to Singapore. A launch armed with four Maxim guns, and accompanied by two boats, having on board three officers and forty men of the *Emden*, shortly afterward reached the beach, but before they destroyed the instruments and wrecked the wireless installation H.M.S. *Minotaur* had received the marconigram. The *Melbourne* also appears to have picked it up, and the captain detached the *Sydney*, which was a faster ship, to secure the coveted prize. This was a noble thing to do, for Captain Silver would have been quite within his province had he proceeded in the *Melbourne* and brought von Müller to action.

No sooner had the landing party under the command of Captain-Lieutenant von Mücke secured the knives and fire-arms of the staff and finished their destructive work than the cruiser *Sydney* was seen approaching, and the *Emden* got under way to meet her. A sharp, shrill blast of the siren was evidently intended to recall the party, but almost before they had got into the boats the cruiser was churning the water at considerable speed. It became a case of *sauve qui peut* so far as the Germans on the island were concerned. In justice to them it must be frankly admitted that they set about the solution

of the problem with the ready resource which characterized their commander. Within easy distance of the shore was the schooner *Ayesha*, the property of Mr Clunies-Ross, the owner of the islands. They rowed out to her, asked a few questions of the captain—a man of Devon who has since returned to England—ascertained what there was on board, and returned to shore. A little later they boarded the ship for a second time, and politely informed the crew that they had twenty minutes to pack up their belongings and leave. Labouring under the erroneous idea that sailors of the British mercantile marine wore white clothes, all articles answering to that description were commandeered, likewise the navigating gear and other nautical articles likely to be of service to them in their endeavour to escape. The crew had no alternative but to obey without unnecessary delay. One cannot argue with a bayonet. They were escorted back to the island and made prisoners of war, together with the telegraph staff. Then all were marched to a boat-shed and placed under guard, while the remainder of the Germans rifled the stores and generally prepared for their forthcoming voyage. In addition to food and water they helped themselves to various articles, including pistols and cartridges, cutlery, watches, knives, razors, tobacco, clothes, prism-glasses, cigarette-cases, and a camera, the total value being estimated at over £160. A pirates' haul in very truth! In

every other respect the Germans treated the islanders in a way which betrayed no signs of *Kultur*.

Having made all snug on board the *Ayesha*, the Germans remained in possession of the island until it was conclusively proved to them that the *Emden* was getting decidedly the worst of her encounter with the Australian cruiser. They stood watching the fight through their glasses as though they were spectators of a horse race. In the gathering dusk they hoisted sail, fervently hoping that under cover of night they would be able to steal away without attracting the attention of too-vigilant officers of any British man-of-war that might be in the vicinity. They were only too well aware that the *Sydney* was about, but there was the chance of escape and they took it. Von Müller had remarked that if he came up with an enemy he would "make a good run for it." The opportunity was not given to him, but fell to his abandoned landing party.

We have only a number of German reports—wireless and otherwise—on which to base the remainder of the story of the Hun adventurers who left Cocos Island on the 9th November at six o'clock in the evening. When the prisoners in the boat-house broke out of their gaol they tore down the German ensign that fluttered above them and congratulated themselves on the knowledge that the little schooner was in a very leaky condition and both her pumps were out of order. The crew of forty-three managed

to patch her up, for on the 28th of the following month it was reported that she visited Padang, a port on the south-west coast of Sumatra, and obtained further supplies by raiding the stores of a Dutch telegraph station. This may or may not be true. Eventually the Captain-Lieutenant and his little band made their way to the Red Sea port of Hodeideh, where they discarded the *Ayesha*. After a terrible march across country and conflicts with unfriendly Arabs, as a result of which they suffered several casualties, the little band arrived at Jeddah, where the wounded were placed in hospital. In due course they reached Bagdad, and got on to the Anatolian Railway and so to Haidar-Pasha, whence they were conveyed by a destroyer to Seraglio Point. Their appearance at Constantinople naturally aroused considerable enthusiasm amongst the Turks; we hear of them parading through the streets with a guard of honour and then lose sight of them on board a German steamer, where they took up their quarters.

As soon as the *Emden* got under way she opened fire at the *Sydney* and steamed north at top speed. Her shooting, as Captain Glossop avers, was "very accurate," a statement borne out by an eye-witness on land. The first shell to strike the *Sydney* penetrated the deck before exploding, wounding several of the crew. The *Emden* also had the good fortune to put her opponent's main range-finder out of action and to damage the after fire-control station,

wounding all the men there. A boy standing near, engaged in looking through a telescope for the wash that trails behind a torpedo, scarcely took any notice of the occurrence, and quietly remained at his post. The coolness and courage of the youngsters was indeed remarkable. Another lad who happened to come under notice was equally unconcerned as he carried shells from the hoist to the gun he was serving. He walked to and fro on the open deck as unconcerned as a boy crosses a deserted thoroughfare. He was one of three lads who had volunteered from the training ship *Tingira*, and in his quiet way deserved well of the Empire on this memorable November day. Very few of the *Emden's* shells did serious damage, although one exploded in the boys' mess, but any danger of fire was removed by the water thrown up by the bow, which poured through the shot-hole and soon flooded that portion of the vessel.

Meanwhile the gun-layers of the *Sydney* had got to work. "About the third salvo of our chaps," says an engine-room artificer of the Australian cruiser, "brought down one of the funnels of the *Emden*, and tore away all the after part of her deck, and, luckily for us, flooded the submerged flat where her torpedoes were kept. We were engaged hot and strong about two hours, and the greatest credit is due to our skipper, who manœuvred the ship splendidly. We were steaming about 27 knots, and it was not long before we silenced the

Emden's guns one by one until there was but one left. But her crew were very game, and used that one until all her ammunition was gone and she started to sink, so the only hope they had was to run her aground on the island." "It was magnificent," says another eye-witness on the *Sydney*, "to see the way those boys, many of them only about eighteen, worked the guns. They were frantically excited, and every time a good shot got home they simply yelled with delight, and it took us older hands all our time to restrain them. 'There goes another funnel, boys,' they'd yell and then let go an ear-splitting 'Hurrah!' 'One or two more like that and she's a gonner,' they'd shout as a shell got home under the water-line."

Von Müller, in his account of the battle, states that at first "our marksmanship was good, but soon the heavy British guns gained the upper hand, inflicting heavy losses among our gunners. As we were short of ammunition," he adds, "we were obliged to cease firing." The real truth of the matter is that they were short of guns; for several had been put out of action. By skilfully manœuvring his vessel so as to keep out of the *Emden's* range, in the performance of which he covered a distance of nearly sixty miles, Captain Glossop used his superior weight of metal, his longer range, and his speed to the greatest possible advantage. Von Müller attempted to get sufficiently close to use his tor-



Men of the "Sydney" cheering as the "Emden" sank
C. M. PADDAY

pedoes, but was foiled. The *Sydney's* broadside of 500 lb. crashed into the corsair again and again, until she was forced to run ashore to prevent going down with all hands. It has been stated that she took the ground when steaming at 19 knots, and that the jar was so terrific that the man at the wheel was killed instantly by being flung against it.

According to an officer on the *Sydney*, whose account of the action appeared in *The Times*, the hottest part of the battle for those on the Australian cruiser was the first thirty minutes. The first shot to do serious damage struck the vessel close to No. 2 starboard gun, knocking out "practically the whole of that gun's crew." Then a cordite fire started, but was fortunately got under by the hose that is always in evidence when a ship is in action. "Our hits were not very serious," the officer says. "We were 'hulled' in about three places. The shell that exploded in the boys' mess deck, apart from ruining the poor little beggars' clothes, provided a magnificent stock of trophies. For two or three days they kept finding fresh pieces. The only important damage was the after control platform, which is one mass of gaping holes and tangled iron, and the foremost range-finder shot away. Other hits, though 'interesting, don't signify.'"

Perhaps the most entertaining part of the same breezy letter is that dealing with the *Emden* as they found her on the following day, the 10th November.

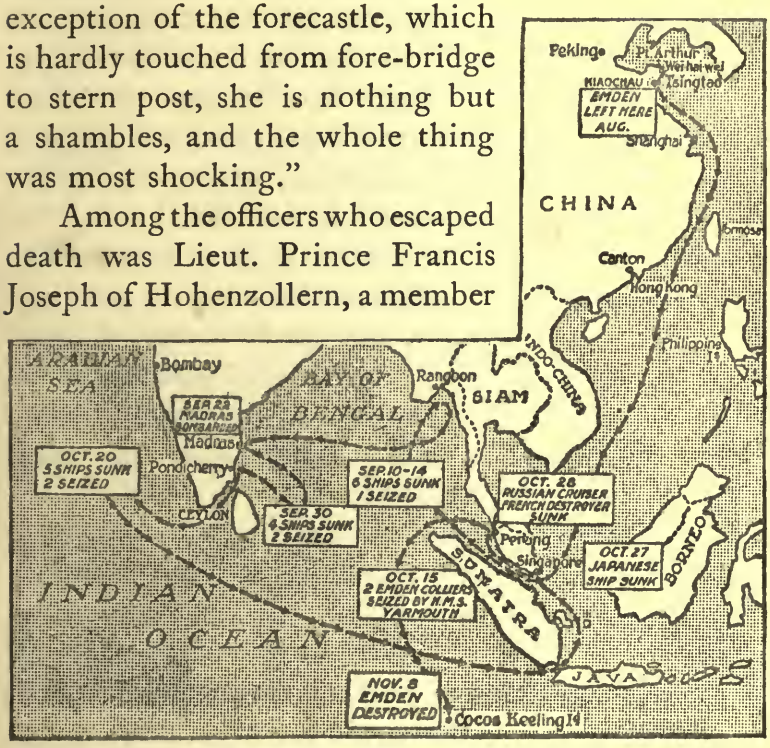
"At 11.10 A.M.," we read, "we arrived off the *Emden* again. I was sent over to her in one of the cutters. Luckily her stern was sticking out beyond where the surf broke, so that with a rope from the stern of the ship one could ride close under one quarter, with the boat's bow to seaward. The rollers were very big, and the surging to and fro and so on made getting aboard fairly difficult. However, the Germans standing aft gave me a hand up, and I was received by the captain of the *Emden*. I told him from our captain that if he would give his parole the captain was prepared to take all his crew on board the *Sydney* and take them straight up to Colombo. He stuck a little over the word 'parole,' but readily agreed when I explained the exact scope of it. And now came the dreadful job of getting the badly wounded into the boats. There were 15 of these. . . . The Germans were all suffering badly from thirst, so we hauled the boats' water casks up on deck, and they eagerly broached them, giving the wounded some first.

"I took an early opportunity of saluting the captain of the *Emden* and saying, 'You fought very well, sir.' He seemed taken aback, and said, 'No.' I went away, but presently he came up to me and said, 'Thank you very much for saying that, but I was not satisfied. We should have done better. You were very lucky in shooting away all my voice-pipes at the beginning.'

Rounding-up the Elusive *Emden*

"When I got a chance, with all the boats away, I went to have a look round the ship. I have no intention of describing what I saw. With the exception of the forecastle, which is hardly touched from fore-bridge to stern post, she is nothing but a shambles, and the whole thing was most shocking."

Among the officers who escaped death was Lieut. Prince Francis Joseph of Hohenzollern, a member



THE LAST CRUISE OF THE *EMDEN*

[*From* The Daily Mail, *by permission*

of the elder branch of the German Emperor's family, and the second son of the reigning Prince William. In Germany the destruction of the corsair had a particularly depressing effect, not only because of the loss of the vessel, but because the trade of their hated

rival in Indian waters could no longer be harassed. "A black day for us," comments the *Cologne Gazette*. The town after which the cruiser was named sent the Kaiser a message of condolence, to which he replied in characteristic fashion and with due appreciation of the virtues of the now notorious Iron Cross: "I heartily thank you for your telegram on the occasion of the tragic but heroic end of my cruiser *Emden*, which, even in her last battle with a superior enemy, gathered laurels. A new and stronger *Emden* will arise, on whose bow the Iron Cross will be attached in memory of the old *Emden*." A week previous the same august personage had congratulated the town "on its godchild in the Indian Ocean whose bold cruising deeds fill every German heart with pride and joy."

Tremendous enthusiasm was aroused throughout the British Empire, particularly in the Commonwealth, whose young Navy had won its first victory. "The smashing of the German cruiser *Emden*," said the Prime Minister, speaking at Pukekohe, "is another laurel for the Australian Navy. The experience of the past few weeks should be a lesson to the people of the South Pacific. The countries bordering on the Pacific should combine in providing a fleet for these seas. Where the seas are British we shall keep them British for all time." "Bravo, Australia!" cabled the acting Premier of Canada. "All Canada congratulates you." When the official

crier rang the historic *Lutine* bell at Lloyd's and announced: "The *Emden* has been sunk," those who were in the room sent up such a rousing cheer that the remainder of the sentence was lost. Although he attempted to complete his speech no fewer than ten times, the representatives of the shipping world in London positively refused to hear him. The louder he tried to speak the more enthusiastic their shouts became. In India the news gave great satisfaction, particularly as at that time it was firmly believed in some of the bazaars that the King had been taken prisoner and conveyed to Berlin in a Zeppelin. Like Duncan at the battle of Camperdown, who remarked to De Winter, "Rather a brave man's hand than his sword," Captain Glossop allowed von Müller and his officers to retain their weapons.

When the *Sydney* returned to the transports she was ordered to steam through the lines. It must have been a proud moment for her commander, but out of consideration for the many wounded he signalled that he hoped there might be no cheering. This humanitarian request was granted, and although both soldiers and sailors were almost bursting with enthusiasm for the gallant part played by their comrades of the *Sydney*, the order for silence was faithfully and cheerfully obeyed.

In due course the prisoners were placed on board the *Orvieto* A 3 at Colombo. Although they were watched over by an armed guard because they would

not give their parole, the German officers and sailors were well treated and usually did full justice to the three-course dinner that was provided for them throughout the voyage, a member of the Australian contingent noting that whereas he and his comrades slept in hammocks, the prisoners were provided with mattresses and blankets. "They even asked for hot water for shaving and got it." At Port Said they were transferred to the Orient liner *Orama* and brought to England.

Thus Captain Karl von Müller, naval officer, humorist, and sportsman, disappears from view until the end of the Great War, by which time all that remains of the guns and anchors of his ship will be mounted in the Federal capital of the Commonwealth as a memorial of Australia's first naval victory.

CHAPTER VII

IN PERIL OF SUBMARINE MINES

THERE is a sinister 'something' about the submarine mine which has never made it a favourite weapon of warfare with the British Navy. It suggests the idea of hitting below the belt—which it does literally—and Jack Tar therefore dislikes it. All may be fair in love and war, but the average sailor is as conservative as he is superstitious. He prefers visible enemies to unseen foes. There is no personality about a mine. The A.B. talks about 'she' and 'her' when referring to his ship; he calls a mine 'it'—a neuter, unnatural thing. It is a pariah of the sea, an outcast seeking to deal death by stealth, for all the world like an armed burglar who sandbags his victim from behind the safe shelter of a door. To put the matter bluntly, Jack regards it as a device of the devil, and he is not afraid to say so.

The deadliness of the mine was conclusively proved during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, when the Japanese battleships *Hatsuse* and *Yashima* both succumbed to Russian mines in the Yellow Sea. These losses were not at first recognized as due to these deadly machines, but the cause of their sinking

was afterward ascertained, and the Admiralties of the world duly noted it. The Russian flagship *Petropavlovsk* suffered a like fate off Port Arthur in the same campaign, during the course of which no fewer than fourteen Russian and ten Japanese vessels were lost by mines. This method of destruction was not new to Germany in 1904, for her Navy was then provided with mines, but it was abundantly proved that she had profited by the experience of the belligerents when Great Britain refused to stand aside and let weaker nations go to the wall in the golden summer days of 1914.

Within forty-eight hours of the outbreak of war the British Navy suffered the loss of a fine vessel in H.M.S. *Amphion*, owing to the indiscriminate sowing of mines by Germany. With callous disregard of international law and the dictates of a common humanity, mines were laid along trade routes. "These proceedings," said Mr Asquith in the House of Commons, "besides violating the principle of the freedom of the seas for peaceful trading, constituted a breach of the Eighth Hague Convention of 1907, which was ratified by Germany." The sincerity of Germany may be judged by the remark of her delegate at the Convention, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who was so good as to assure his listeners when the subject was being discussed that "A belligerent who lays mines assumes a very heavy responsibility toward neutrals and peaceful shipping.

On that point we are all agreed. No one will resort to such means unless for military reasons of an absolutely urgent character. But military acts are not governed solely by principles of international law. There are other factors. Conscience, good sense, and the sentiment of duty imposed by principles of humanity will be the surest guide for the conduct of sailors, and will constitute the most effective guarantee against abuses. . . ." Both Germany and France reserved their consent to Article 2, which forbids the laying of automatic mines off the coasts and ports of the enemy with the sole object of intercepting commercial shipping.

The Baron's remark may or may not have been so much dust thrown in the eyes of the world, but one thing is certain : neither on land nor sea did Germany show the slightest regard for Articles of the Hague Convention. A Norwegian steamer, the *Bjaerka*, which happened to stray into a German mine-field, was allowed to proceed on her course until she was struck, although a guardship was stationed near by. It is to the undying honour of Great Britain that she did not resort to the use of mines until two months after the outbreak of hostilities, when it became absolutely necessary for her own self-defence to do so. The German mines, we were officially assured, "are not laid in connexion with any definite military scheme such as the closing of a military port or as a distinct operation against a fighting fleet,

but appear to be scattered on the chance of catching individual British war or merchant vessels." Neutral ships in ever-increasing numbers soon began to pay the price of Germany's perfidy, both in the North Sea and the Baltic, thereby setting at naught the international agreement that "when anchored automatic contact mines are employed, all possible precautions ought to be taken for the security of peaceful shipping." The British Admiralty endeavoured to keep the sea routes open for legitimate commerce by means of patrolling vessels and mine-sweepers, and impressed upon all captains of whatever nationality the desirability of touching at a British port before entering the danger zone, so that they might be informed of the routes and channels which were comparatively safe. The 'comparatively' is used advisedly, for it will be readily understood that it was absolutely impossible to guarantee safety.

Trawlers, presumably engaged in the peaceful industry of fishing, and often enough flying a neutral flag or bearing the names of British vessels, played no small part in Germany's murderous policy of sowing the sea with these hidden perils. Large vessels of the type of the *Königin Luise*[1] were the exception rather than the rule, probably because they were more difficult to disguise. A much bigger liner, the North German Lloyd s.s. *Berlin*,

[1] See Chapter III.

of 17,300 tons, also seems to have taken part in the work, for when she put into Trondhjem, on the west coast of Norway, it was noticed that she had been specially fitted for the purpose. As there was very little coal in her bunkers, and apparently no mines were on board when she steamed into the beautiful fiord, we do not run a grave risk of being unjust to the enemy if we assume that she had been busy sowing death on the great seaway between the Continent and Great Britain.

All too frequently a steamer, in her praiseworthy endeavour to rescue the crew of another which had met with disaster a short time before, encountered a similar cruel fate. Such a case was that of the two Danish steamers *Maryland* and *Chr. Broberg*. The former, a new vessel of 5136 tons, bound for Copenhagen with a cargo of maize, foundered a few hours before the latter, whose men heard the explosion and at once lowered two boats to search for possible survivors. Mist and gathering darkness were against them, but early the following morning, when they were keeping a sharp look-out, the *Chr. Broberg* was struck immediately under the bridge, tearing a hole in the engine-room, killing the second engineer, and shattering part of the machinery. A fireman was hurled into the sea and subsequently rescued by one of the boats which the survivors managed to launch. Shortly afterward they were discovered by a tug and taken to Lowestoft. The

master of the Grimsby trawler *Kilmarnock* having sighted floating mines off the Humber altered his course to warn a warship which was in the vicinity, and while proceeding to do so his own vessel was blown up and six of the hands were either killed or drowned. Within a few weeks trawlers valued at £200,000 and belonging to that port had been destroyed.

It was not until the enemy succeeded in laying a mine-field off the north coast of Ireland, on the main trade route between America and Liverpool, that the British Government declared the North Sea a military area. The discovery was made by the foundering of the s.s. *Manchester Commerce*, with the loss of the captain and thirteen of her crew, near Tory Island while outward bound to Montreal. By restricting all shipping crossing the North Sea to a narrow passage the Navy might reasonably hope to check the epidemic of mines by exercising a much stricter supervision then heretofore. In the following chapter we shall deal with the superb heroism of the mine-sweepers who toiled in the supremely hazardous task of keeping the channel clear. Here it must suffice to say that the plan proved extraordinarily successful, and it was only occasionally that a disaster was caused by a mine.

Submarine mines are of two principal types, floating and anchored. The first, secured to a small buoy for support, roam about of their own sweet

will, or rather of that of the tide, and are consequently a danger to friend as well as to foe. By international law they are supposed to be fitted with a device which renders them harmless within an hour of being dropped, a restriction which Germany thought well to violate. The enemy was to find it possible to be 'hoist with his own petard.' Indeed, the ship in which Prince Lichnowsky, the late German Ambassador, travelled narrowly escaped disaster. The liner *Grethe Hemroth*, of Emden, was not so fortunate. She struck a German mine in the Baltic and went down with all hands. Anchored mines can be fixed to float at any depth, usually ten or fifteen feet, by means of adjusting the length of cable which secures them to the anchor. Not infrequently they are sunk in pairs, with a rope to connect them. A vessel comes ploughing along, its bow strikes the rope, and a mine is brought to either side of the victim. The force of such an explosion can only be appreciated by the poor unfortunates on board.

The mines most favoured by the enemy are usually exploded by the projecting spines or plungers at the top coming in contact with an object. These spines are made of very soft metal, and in each of them is a delicate glass tube containing a liquid which pours upon the electrodes of an electric battery beneath when one of the spines is bent and generates a current sufficient to discharge

the contents of the steel cylinder. Trinitrotoluene, or T.N.T. as it is called in the British Navy, a favourite explosive with the Germans, is detonated by mercury fulminate, and has the additional advantage from the enemy's point of view of bursting the mine in large pieces, thereby rendering it far more destructive. There is also a mine which remains beneath the surface without float or anchor, the invention of a Swede named Leon. What are known as observation mines are usually employed for harbour defence purposes, and are fired from the shore by means of electricity.

Very artful devices have been resorted to by the Germans to act as decoys. For instance, the master of the Grimsby steam trawler *Agatha* reported that while he was proceeding about his business in the North Sea a ship's lifeboat was sighted adrift. When his vessel was sufficiently close it was found that the boat was without occupants. A line was therefore made fast to it, and the trawler proceeded to tow it to port. No sooner had she started than a loud explosion rent the air. A mine had evidently been placed close to the boat to blow up any ship that ventured near. It was an evil plot, doubtless connected with the Board of Trade regulations that drifting boats must be secured and handed over to the Receiver of Wrecks, but on this particular occasion it was frustrated. According to the master of a Norwegian vessel, in the early days of the conflict

mines lashed to planks were to be seen floating in the North Sea. It is also said that some of the German mine-layers were painted the same colour as the steamers which run from Harwich to the Hook of Holland and of those crossing from Queenborough to Flushing, the idea of course being to deceive the British patrol boats.

A long chapter was added to the Book of Heroism at the beginning of the Great War. There was the case of the Danish trawler, the *Skuli Forgeti*, for instance, which was blown up by a German mine on the trade route to Newcastle, about thirty miles off the coast, on the night of the 26th August 1914. She was returning to the Iceland fishing grounds. Suddenly the vessel shook from stem to stern and flames shot up from the bow. In the forecastle half a dozen of the crew were sleeping after a day of strenuous exertion. Captain Christiansen and others made their way forward waist-deep in water and rescued two of the number, who were wounded ; the others were killed by the force of the explosion. The master himself had been lying in his bunk when the disaster took place, and was hurt about the head, yet his one thought was for the welfare of those under his command. Eventually a boat was launched and the injured lowered into it. They were rescued by the crew of the trawler *Lottie Leask*, of North Shields, who just before had found a mine in their nets and exploded

another by their gear coming in contact with it, the vessel fortunately sustaining no material damage. Shortly afterward a drifter found three men clinging to wreckage, in which plight they had been for three hours, their steamer having sunk in two minutes.

Four brothers, the sole survivors of a similar outrage, were found at sea in an open boat, in company of the dead body of one of their comrades. An explosion and a cloud of smoke alone indicated the loss of a Ramsgate fishing smack, whose crew perished, while three members of a company of ten on the South Shields trawler *Lily* declared that there was nothing to be seen of her one minute after the explosion. In the case of the s.s. *Ardmount* the ship was hit by three mines, which caused the boilers to blow up, and when the captain came to the surface all that remained of his vessel was wreckage. On the other hand, a stricken ship has been known to remain above water for seven hours before taking the final plunge.

A wonderful rescue was effected in the case of the trawler *Imperialist*. With dramatic suddenness the ship struck a mine at midnight, when it was making for Hull with its cargo of fish. In three minutes all was over. In that short space of time a boat had been launched and one man had entered it. With cool forethought the other fellows, feeling the ship going down under them, pushed the dinghy clear so that it would not be engulfed by the swirl

of waters as the trawler disappeared. They then jumped clear. The man in the boat next proceeded to haul in some of his mates, who helped to rescue the others. The master and a spare hand, probably numbed by the sudden immersion, perished.

The captain of the General Steam Navigation Company's steamer *Nautilus* managed to save life by boldly running his ship on a sandbank after it had struck a floating mine. Thirteen of the men who took to the lifeboat were lost, but the captain, the engineer, and a number of the crew stuck to the vessel, and were rescued by a passing ship after having spent a night of terror on the only mast that remained. During that awful time they were lashed by driving sleet and washed by icy seas which frequently broke over them. It is thus that Germany makes war on non-combatants, whether British or neutral.

What does it feel like to be on a mined ship? Perhaps the best description is that furnished by one of the crew of the *Linari*, a large steamer of some 6000 tons, who went through this extremely unenviable experience. "It seemed exactly like a cart going over a great big brick," he asserted. "Everyone was shot off his feet, the forepart of the ship was shot up in the air, the iron bulkheads flew up, and the windlass went over the bows. The telegraph was shattered on the bridge, lamps fell, tables were blown out of their sockets, and dishes

flew in all directions. The captain and second officers were thrown from the bridge and came down straight on their faces. Only two men were slightly injured, and they were in their bunks."

These descendants of the vikings who roam the sea in season and out of season, dodging mines one day and meeting with disaster on the next, are usually possessed of a stoical philosophy which stands them in excellent stead. "If we hit a mine we shall be blown up," said one of them. "The English fleet will win whether we get blown up or not. So what does it matter?"

Many extraordinary escapes have been recorded, but none more marvellous than that of a Scotsman on the Norwegian steamer *Vaaren*. The explosion was of so terrible a character that in order to launch one of the boats in the minimum of time it was found necessary to hack the ropes which secured it to the davits. Seventeen men entered it, but no sooner had they done so than the craft capsized, and nine of them were drowned. The others managed to grasp the keel of the upturned boat, which was sucked toward the stern of the steamer by the rapidly revolving screw. Four of the poor fellows, unable to get out of the way of the propeller, were either killed or stunned, and were washed away. One of the blades caught the Scotsman's jacket, but the material was not sufficiently strong to hold. With powerful strokes he managed to get

clear and afterward to regain the boat, being finally rescued with his exhausted comrades over an hour later.

On many occasions mines have been discovered in the trawl of fishing-boats. Two were found in the nets of the Ramsgate smack *Clematis*. When the crew of the Dutch herring boat *Poolester* were endeavouring to get rid of one of these infernal fish it exploded and damaged the boat so seriously that she sank. Seven men were killed when hauling the trawl net of the Grimsby trawler *Don* by a similar explosion. The crew of the *Windsor*, belonging to the same port, had also an alarming experience, fortunately unattended by tragedy so far as human life was concerned. A mine got jammed between the trawl-board and the ship's rail. The men took to the lifeboat and made an unsuccessful attempt to release the mine from its dangerous position. They were on the point of returning to their vessel when the machine went off, stunning most of the crew. When they recovered it was to find that both the trawler and themselves were sinking. An ugly split appeared in the lifeboat, and the side of the trawler was so shattered that it was obvious she would disappear almost immediately. For nearly twenty-four hours the men rowed and baled to keep themselves afloat ; they were then seen by another trawler and rescued when almost in the last stages of exhaustion.

Another Grimsby trawler, the *Recolo*, also paid the price of German perfidy. As the men were leaning over the side of the vessel dragging up the net an explosion took place immediately under them. Seven men were terribly injured, but had sufficient strength to get into the ship's boat, whence they were rescued after drifting for six hours. A trimmer died of his injuries while they were on the look-out for relief, and the second engineer went down with the ship.

The Navy has been more fortunate than the mercantile marine. Nevertheless in addition to the *Amphion*, the destroyer *Lynx* was sunk by a mine on the 9th August 1915, four officers and twenty-two men of her complement of a hundred only being saved. In September 1914 the *Speedy*, a torpedo gun-boat hitherto engaged on fishery protection work in the North Sea, met with destruction, and sank shortly after she had rescued the crew of a steam drifter who had lost their vessel by a similar disaster. While operating off the Belgian coast on the 7th of May 1915, the large destroyer *Maori* was blown up, but some of the crew were able to take to the boats before she went under. While Lieut.-Commander G. L. D. Gibbs, of the *Crusader*, was engaged in trying to effect their rescue, the shore batteries opened fire. The *Crusader* sustained this assault for an hour and a half, and was then compelled to leave her own boats and those of the *Maori* to the

tender mercies of the enemy. According to German reports, officers and men numbering in all ninety-five were taken prisoners into Zeebrugge.

In January, 1916, H.M.S. *King Edward VII* became a victim of one of the infernal machines of the sea. The disaster took place in heavy weather, otherwise it is quite likely that it would not have been necessary to abandon her. Only two men were injured.

Several of the enemy's own men-of-war are also known to have suffered by reason of the policy of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the German Minister of Marine. In the first week of the conflict a destroyer struck a mine and sank off the Danish island of Falster, with the loss of forty-two officers and men killed, and in June, 1915, a submarine blew up close to Emden as she was leaving to do her fell work in English waters. On the latter occasion the only survivors were two officers.

The most severe loss sustained by Germany as a direct sequel to her own nefarious work was that of the *Yorck*, which struck a chain of mines blocking the entrance to Jahde Bay and lost some 300 of her crew. The *Yorck* was an armoured cruiser of 9350 tons, launched in 1904, and it is believed that she was one of the units of the raiding squadron which 'bombarded' Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth on the 3rd November 1914 and failed to do the slightest damage.[1]

[1] See Chapter XII.

However carefully mines may be fixed, it is obviously impossible to prevent them from dragging in rough weather. Two years after the conclusion of hostilities between Russia and Japan these dangerous weapons were to be met with in the Yellow Sea. This was testified to by a Chinese delegate at the Hague Conference of 1907. "The Chinese Government," he said, "has been obliged up to the present day to furnish ships engaged in the coasting trade with instruments for fishing up and destroying floating mines. Notwithstanding all the precautions which have been taken, a large number of trading and fishing boats, of junks and sampans, have been sunk through coming in contact with them. Many boats have been destroyed without anything having been heard of them, and it has been calculated that from five to six hundred of my countrymen have lost their lives through these dangerous machines."

During the autumn and winter of 1914 literally hundreds of mines were washed ashore, both on English and Continental coasts. At Westkapelle, Holland, one of these was being examined by competent persons when it exploded and killed seven men, including three naval officers. So numerous did they become in the neighbourhood of the Scheldt that the river steamers were compelled to run during the day only. At Heyst a mine that had floated in with the tide killed three little children who were

playing at no great distance off. At Hartlepool one exploded against the rocks, and another near the breakwater, while in the Gulf of Bothnia several went off owing to the pressure of pack ice. Many drifted in the direction of the south coast of Norway and caused considerable damage in the neighbourhood of Christiansand.

Fortunately there is a method for dealing with this barbaric method of waging war and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the British Navy soon proved its ability to cope with the menace. It was a colossal task, undertaken in the thorough way characteristic of the service, and appropriately enough the brave men who had most to fear from mines, because they jeopardized their industry, were given an opportunity of taking part. Right loyally did they respond to the call.

CHAPTER VIII

AT WORK WITH THE SEA-SCAVENGERS

THEY call them Scavengers of the Sea along the East Coast. The term does not convey the impression that they are heroes. Yet there is not a man of them who is not deserving of the name. Landsmen refer to them as mine-sweepers, which is likewise their official designation. The men themselves are proud of one thing, and of one thing only. They are 'Jacky Fisher's men,' as are Jellicoe, Beatty, Sturdee and many another holding high command in the Grand Fleet. Before the Black Eagle of Prussia showed her talons some of the 'scavengers' were of the Royal Naval Reserve, but the majority were simply masters and hands on trawlers and drifters. When the bird of ill omen, no longer posing as the dove of peace, began to lay her nefarious eggs in the North Sea, many of the fishermen were driven out of their calling. Some, fearing more for their ships than for their own lives, hesitated to risk 'th' ole gal.' Others went to sea as usual, and scores never returned. When the call for mine-sweepers came there was not the slightest difficulty in raising sufficient volunteers for the perilous task.

They pride themselves on their connexion with Admiral Lord Fisher, the Father of the modern Navy, owing to the fact that it was he who put into practice Lord Charles Beresford's notion that steamers should be employed for the work instead of the long-boats of the Navy, as was formerly the case. Five trawlers formed the first fleet of mine-sweepers, but in due course the service developed into the Trawler Section of the Royal Naval Reserve, in which over 1200 officers and men were engaged. At the beginning of the Great War they were commanded by Captain Thomas P. Bonham. Since then this particular branch of naval activity has been very considerably augmented, and now gives employment to thousands of sons of the sea.

Although the work "lacks battle glories," as an Australian wrote to the Lord Mayor of London when sending a cheque for £250 for the fund inaugurated for providing these fine fellows with woollen garments and other comforts, it is difficult to over-estimate its value. To enter the zone of floating death day after day and month after month is far more perilous than Arctic exploration and more hazardous than facing the terrors of the ice flow. The vigil of the scavengers of the sea is ceaseless. If their boat is damaged or needs repairs they are transferred to another ship until their own is ready again. Sometimes they do not put foot on shore for months at a stretch. It is exacting labour that

would shatter the nerves of a landsman in an hour—or less—and we can warmly support the petition of the little lad who was told something of their doings and thereafter never forgot to add "God bless the mine-sweepers" when he said his prayers.

The method adopted by the Navy to fight the German submarine mine is extraordinarily simple and wonderfully effective. As a general rule the trawlers or drifters work in pairs, steaming parallel to each other and at a considerable distance apart. To each of them is attached the end of a steel hawser, which is weighted so as to drag at a sufficiently low depth to catch the mooring-rope of its deadly prey. A right royal harvest of the sea some of them get. A skipper whose trawler was one of a little fleet confessed that he and his mates had dragged up and discharged seventy of them as the result of a few hours' 'fishing.' Sometimes the contact of the cable with the mine is sufficient to explode it, but more frequently it is dispatched by gun-fire. If a destroyer is in attendance it deals the death-blow, but when this is not the case the men of the trawler take a 'pot shot.' They like this work. It sounds easy although more than a trifle monotonous, but there is no guarantee that the mine will strike the hawser and not the keel of the trawler. Herein lies the danger, as the lists of killed, missing, injured, and suffering from shock too readily testify. The King has shown his hearty appreciation of these men who



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boldly face invisible death, and in March, 1915, went on board several of the mine-sweepers which happened to be at Harwich. On this occasion he also inspected their officers and men, and thanked them for their excellent work.

When a mine-field is discovered it is frequently discharged by laying a mine in the middle of the field and firing it by means of electricity from a safe distance. This is called countermining, and probably many of the cannonades heard at various seaside resorts of the East Coast have been due to these operations. Occasionally the trawlers come upon the field without having the least warning, as was the case with two which were sweeping some twenty-four miles off the mouth of the Tyne. Five men were killed and eleven injured, the survivors being picked up by a torpedo boat.

"This mine-sweeping is very risky work," writes a petty officer who received the Distinguished Service Medal for bravery, "for you never know when you are going to meet one, and when you do it's like a stab in the back, for you haven't the opportunity of retaliation. A few days ago we came across a floating mine, and before we could destroy it darkness overtook us. We had to anchor as close to it as possible—not a very pleasant undertaking, as the thing was just as likely to drift against the ship as away from it. None of the crew, including myself, wanted to sleep that night, and we were glad when

the dawn arrived, so that we might hunt for it. We hadn't far to look, for we saw it floating on the surface about a hundred yards off. We sink these infernal machines by rifle-fire. I had only ten rounds of ammunition left on the ship, and I expended nine of these without apparent success. But with the last shot I hit the thing a fair smack, and after a few minutes we had the satisfaction of seeing it fill with water and sink."

Far more terrible is the story of brave Harry Evans, the skipper of the mine-layer *Night Hawk*. The incident happened shortly after the disgraceful bombardment of Scarborough. Having shelled the town, the German cruisers laid mines on their return journey, doubtless with the idea of precluding the British from giving chase. Evans was engaged in clearing up these deadly missiles some three or four miles from the rugged Yorkshire coast when suddenly there was "a deadening concussion—as if we had struck a rubber ball." The trawler had been swept up by a mine instead of *vice versa*. According to the skipper's evidence, the bottom of the vessel was knocked to pieces, and those below fell through into the sea, together with the machinery. Every member of the crew was either flung overboard or drawn underboard.

The scavengers keep on in 'smooth sea or storm sea,' and they have effected many a smart rescue from a ship in difficulties. One bleak Sunday

afternoon in January, 1915, the *Penarth*, a Cardiff steamer of a little under 2000 tons register, came lumbering through the surf and spume of a blinding north-north-east gale, in which snow and icy rain played their respective parts all too well. The sky was as heavy as lead, the wind tore through the rigging and whistled as though wishful of striking terror to the souls on board the little steamer. Still, her crew had made a good voyage from the far distance of the River Plate, and as she ploughed her way off the Norfolk coast they consoled themselves with the reflection that Hull was no great distance and here their anxiety would end. Suddenly there was an ugly grating sound, as though something was tearing at the ship's vitals. She had struck Sheringham Shoal, which from time immemorial has played dirty tricks with mariners. It is just an ocean graveyard, where many a stout vessel has perished and many a hero has found a last resting-place. There was no need to examine the extent of the injuries sustained by the *Penarth*, it was all too evident. Great holes gaped in her sides, through which the angry waves tore at her and scattered her cargo of maize in awful fury. The sea was in evil mood that day and hour. It smashed two of the ship's boats and swept the doomed steamer from bows to stern. It left one boat whole and capsized it as soon as some of the crew clambered in. Still the brave seamen continued to fight with their triple

enemies of wind, water, and cold. Six of them clung to the keel in their desperate battle for life, and they stopped there for two long, agonizing hours until the mine-sweeper *Glenprosen* came along, and at imminent peril succeeded in launching a boat and taking them off. One of them, the chief engineer, died before Lowestoft was reached. Five of the crew of twenty-seven who had been hale and hearty when dawn broke were dead when the sun set.

No fewer than twelve officers were 'specially noticed' in a Memorandum issued by the Admiral Commanding the East Coast Mine-sweepers in connexion with the gathering of mines laid by the enemy off Scarborough. The work took from the 19th to the 31st December. It was known that a mine-field had been sown because of the loss of various ships, but there was no indication of its position. Commander Richard H. Walters, R.N., was in charge of the operations, which were so complete that by the 25th a channel had been cleared and traffic was able to pass through by daylight. On one occasion while this work was proceeding Commander (now Captain) Lionel G. Preston, R.N., of H.M.S. *Skipjack*, boldly proceeded to the middle of the area where mines had exploded to render assistance to trawlers which had sustained damage. Lieutenant W. R. Wood, R.N.R., also went to the aid of the sweepers, and crossed the mine-field at low water to bring in the *Valiant* after she had been

struck. Lieutenant Godfrey Craik Parsons, R.N., of H.M.S. *Pekin*, was in charge of a group of trawlers, of which one was blown up and two damaged. He was on No. 58 when she was mined, but scorned to return to port and went on board another sweeper, with the result that on the 19th December, the day of the occurrence, his group exploded eight mines and brought to the surface six more. Skipper George W. Thornton, R.N.T.R., also displayed great coolness and rendered Lieutenant Parsons valuable assistance on this occasion. Lieutenant H. Boothby, R.N.R., also of H.M.S. *Pekin*, went through an even more trying experience, and richly deserved his reward when he was made a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order. After having served on a trawler which was blown up on the same day as the above and succeeded in getting his crew into safety, with the exception of one poor fellow who was killed, he again went out in the *Banyers* on the 16th January 1915 to meet with a similar misfortune. A third officer of the *Pekin*, Lieutenant C. V. Crossley, R.N.R., was in command of a trawler when three violent explosions took place in the neighbourhood of the vessel's stern. Without the slightest hesitation, and at imminent risk, he proceeded to crawl into a narrow space near the screw shaft to ascertain the extent of the damage. He discovered a leak and plugged it up in such a workmanlike way that the pumps were

able to keep down the intake of water, and the *Star of Britain* eventually reached port. Lieutenant Crossley was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.

An act of conspicuous daring and gallantry was that of Sub-Lieutenant W. L. Scott, R.N.R., who launched a dinghy to rescue one of the crew of the trawler *Garmo*. As the vessel was floating nearly vertical at the time, with only the forecastle above water, he ran considerable danger of being engulfed should the ship sink. As a matter of fact the *Garmo* turned completely over a few minutes after the officer had effected his rescue.

On the 29th of the following March two very happy-looking members of the mine-sweeping service walked out of Buckingham Palace, each with the Distinguished Service Cross pinned on his breast. His Majesty had expressed the wish that he might personally honour these gallant skippers, and after the formal ceremony had shaken them cordially by the hand and expressed his appreciation of their gallant deeds. One of them was Mr T. Tringall, of the trawler *Solon*, who on his own responsibility went to the assistance of s.s. *Gallier* after she had struck a mine on Christmas night, 1914. It was as dark as pitch, and as the luckless vessel had no opportunity of showing a flare, Skipper Tringall had to search for her in the mine-field. Skipper E. V. Snowline, of the *Hilda and Ernest*,

Commodore of the Flotilla of Lowestoft Drifters under Chief Gunner Franklin, R.N., was awarded the decoration for having kept to his station in heavy weather and standing by the same steamer. In the Memorandum mention is also made of Skipper William Allerton, R.N.T.R., who performed a similar service. Another brave skipper who refused to quit his post when all the other drifters were driven to seek refuge by reason of the bad weather was Mr Thomas B. Belton, R.N.T.R., who kept at sea and marked the safe channel for shipping.

For services connected with the aftermath of the Scarborough raid five men also received the Distinguished Service Medal and eight were "commended for Good Service done under dangerous conditions."

It is on record that one of these tough little mine-sweepers once boldly tackled a German destroyer and compelled her to beat an ignominious retreat. The action took place at no great distance from the North Hinder Lightship on the 1st May 1915. The mine-sweeper in question was the trawler *Mauri*, of Cardiff, and she was in company of two others. A little after two in the afternoon great coils of smoke were discerned on the horizon, and two destroyers eventually emerged from them, obviously bearing down on the mine-sweepers. It was not long before the men on the latter were able to make out that they were German

ships. Two of the trawlers went off in one direction, followed by a destroyer, while the other paid attention to the *Mauri*. The slow-going little vessel was no match for the swifter A 6, so far as speed was concerned, but the enemy must have been considerably astonished when, after having opened fire and expecting immediate surrender, the *Mauri* promptly returned it from her solitary gun, which must have been of small calibre and was no doubt intended for exploding mines. The two vessels kept up a running fight for some time, the trawler making excellent practice. Then it was noticed that some of the men on the destroyer were preparing to launch a torpedo. With wonderful presence of mind, and without a moment's hesitation, the captain of the *Mauri* jammed his helm hard over and crashed into his opponent, striking her with such force that the bridge fell overboard, taking with it five officers and men. Three of them perished, but the *Mauri* managed to rescue one of the sailors, while the Norwegian s.s. *Varild*, which had been stopped by the destroyers before they had sighted the trawlers, saved one of the officers. Without making the slightest effort to help those of her crew who were in such dire distress, A 6 promptly turned tail and made off. Her consort was still trying to catch up with the other mine-sweepers when she was rudely diverted from the chase by the appearance of several British destroyers.

This incident was followed at no great interval by 'an affair of outposts' which took place in the same neighbourhood. Without hoisting their colours two German torpedo boats attacked the trawler *Colombia*, which was sent to the bottom by a torpedo. A division of British destroyers, comprising the *Laforey*, the *Leonidas*, the *Lawford*, and the *Lark*, sister ships of 965 tons displacement, then came up, chased the enemy vessels and, after an action which lasted about an hour, sunk them both.

Out of a total of fifty-nine German officers and men forty-four were picked up by the destroyers, one of them being saved by the plucky action of Lieutenant Hartnoll, who jumped overboard to effect the rescue. This behaviour is in marked contrast to the inhumanity shown to their own colleagues by the crew of A 6, and also to what had taken place on board one of the warships which had been sent to Davy Jones's locker. According to the evidence of the prisoners, three men had been picked up from the sunken trawler and placed below. There they had been left to perish. Not the slightest effort was made to give the poor fellows the opportunity of saving their lives. Previous to this action, and before daybreak, the *Recruit*, a destroyer of 385 tons, was sunk while on patrol duty by a German submarine. Her complement was sixty-five, of whom four officers and thirty-one men were saved

by the trawler *Daisy*, which narrowly escaped destruction by gun-fire from the underwater craft.

Few men who 'go down to the sea in ships' lack a sense of humour, which is often enough their salvation. The story goes that in the early days of the war the skipper of a trawler saw a German mine and took it in tow. When he came across a patrol boat he promptly came alongside with his prize, to be severely reprimanded by the officer on the bridge. "It's all right, mister," he yelled back, "I've knocked the horns off the thing with a boat-hook." It is part of the German plan to sow dummy mines, and this may have been one, but whether real or false, the yarn has caused many a hearty laugh on the floating ramparts of the British Empire.

CHAPTER IX

CRUISERS THREE AND HEROES ALL

ON the evening of the 22nd September 1914 the loyal citizens of Berlin read with feverish enthusiasm that the 'British North Sea Fleet' was destroyed. While they were congratulating themselves on this stunning blow to Germany's most hated enemy, and the complete vindication of their own policy, Englishmen were perusing a few scanty particulars of the sinking of the *Cressy*, the *Aboukir* and the *Hogue*—the 'Fleet' of the Fatherland's imaginative pressmen—and thinking bitterly of the perils of the patrol.

These armoured cruisers were sister ships, members of a family grown old in the service. They received their death-blow within an hour of each other, and went to a common grave as victims of a common foe. There is a good deal of uncertainty as to why vessels of this kind were left without a covering screen of destroyers to ward off such craft, particularly as they were within 200 miles of the enemy's bases, and comparatively close inshore. Presumably the exigencies of the early days of the war demanded it. When the cruisers were attacked they were also travelling at a low rate of

speed, thus presenting particularly attractive targets for torpedoes, especially as their length and draught of water was 470 feet and 29 feet respectively.

Completed within the years 1901 and 1902, the *Cressy* being the oldest of the trio, they were not regarded as modern vessels. Yet they were useful assets to the Fleet, and had been refitted comparatively recently, although it had been determined before the outbreak of war not to spend further money on them. Their displacement was 12,000 tons, maximum speed 21 knots, and complement 750, which is as many as that of some battleships. Probably sixty per cent. of the crews were reservists, which meant that the long death-roll fell heavily on widows and children. The ships were armed with two 9·2-in., twelve 6-in., fourteen 12-pr., three 3-pr., and four machine guns, and had two submerged torpedo tubes. The class is no longer required. The vessels were neither fast enough nor provided with sufficiently heavy guns for adequate service in the battle conditions of to-day, and the primary work for which they were originally intended—namely, the attacking of merchantmen and protecting the trade routes—is now relegated to other types of vessel. Indeed, these heavy armoured ships were what one might term half-way between the light cruisers and the battle cruisers of Lord Fisher's reformed Navy, and with the coming of these they fell into obsolescence.

Nearly 60 officers and 1400 men perished in the triple tragedy. Had there been alarm one would not have been surprised, so sudden and unexpected was the disaster to all three ships. There was no panic, however; on the contrary, wonderful discipline was evident from the moment the *Aboukir*, the first vessel to be torpedoed, was struck until the waves of the North Sea had closed over her ill-fated sisters. As the *Cressy* was going down some of those who remained on board were singing "We All Go the Same Way Home." The saddest fact, and also from one point of view the most cheering, is that it was quite possible that if the *Cressy* and the *Hogue* had not gone to the assistance of the *Aboukir* neither would have received her death-blow. While they were thus engaged in this instinctive act of mercy the enemy stabbed them. The Admiralty afterward reminded commanders of large ships that in war the dictates of humanity could not be allowed to imperil the gravest interests of the Navy, and that their duty was to summon small craft of all kinds by wireless and not to risk their own ships in attempting to rescue the crews of others.

"The duty in which the *Cressy*, the *Hogue*, and the *Aboukir* were engaged," Mr Winston Churchill avowed, "was an essential part of the arrangements by which the control of the seas and the safety of the country are maintained, and the lives lost were as usefully, as necessarily, and as gloriously devoted

to the requirements of his Majesty's service as if the loss had been incurred in a general action."

The cruisers were patrolling in line-ahead between 6.15 and 6.30 on the morning of the 22nd September, and were some distance from each other, when the *Aboukir* was struck by a torpedo on the starboard beam, probably between the first and second boilers. There was no deafening roar, only a dull thud. Many of the crew were below, and some of them must have been killed outright, for so great was the force of the explosion that men on watch were struck by the flying fragments and died instantly. Others were flung out of their hammocks and sustained various injuries.

The *Aboukir* heeled over, righted herself as though determined not to surrender, and then gradually listed until the four funnels were horizontal with the water. Captain Drummond,[1] who was probably the last man to leave the cruiser, was busily engaged in saving life from the moment he realized that his ship was doomed. "What about yourself, Captain?" some one asked him. "You look to *yourself*, my boy, never mind me," was the good-humoured reply.

Many of the men thought that a mine had caused the disaster, and with good reason, as a trawler had been seen that morning engaged in sowing these deadly missiles. Fire was opened on her, and it was

[1] Afterward appointed to command the battleship *Illustrious*.

believed that she sank. The consorts of the *Aboukir* immediately closed, and without delay the launch of the *Hogue*—a rowing-boat capable of holding 100 men—was got ready and her two lifeboats were sent to the assistance of the distressed vessel. All the boats on the *Cressy* were also lowered, and as men drifted by several of the crew, tying ropes round their waists, plunged in to assist them. Some of the more severely injured were hauled on deck and attended to in the *Hogue's* sick-bay.

Before her launch had started off, the *Hogue* herself was in need of succour, for two torpedoes struck her on the starboard side amidships. The first explosion was followed by a deeper roar, apparently due to the blowing up of the aft 9·2 magazine. All further attempts at helping their brethren in distress had perforce to be discontinued. Orders were given to the crew to take off their clothes so that they might not be impeded by them should they have to abandon the ship. Everything that would float was then flung overboard, and instructions given for the boats on the booms to be manned. Whatever thought the captain might have entertained of saving his vessel was dispelled by Commander Reginald A. Norton,[1] who ascertained that the damage in the engine-rooms was so extensive that within a few minutes of the attack the water

[1] Subsequently appointed Flag-Commander to Rear-Admiral R.S. Phipps Hornby, of the armoured cruiser *Lancaster*.

had risen over the gratings. Before the Commander reached the bridge the starboard entry-port doors had been burst open and the ship was gradually heeling over.

It was obvious that the *Hogue* was doomed. The only thing remaining to be done was to give the men an opportunity to bid for life. Shouting to those in the port battery to jump overboard as the launch was alongside, Commander Norton made his way to the bridge. When he reached it the ship lurched heavily, and would have flung him off had he not managed to cling to a ring-bolt. Eventually he dropped on to the deck, and was washed away. Somehow or other he got back, climbed up the ship's side, and was no sooner on deck than the waves again claimed him. After swimming about for some time, and occasionally resting on wreckage already supporting other poor fellows, he was picked up by a cutter. The *Hogue* sank by the stern, her four tall funnels breaking away in the process. Just before he was swept off the bridge Captain W. S. Nicholson[1] waved his cap to the men in the water, who cheered as heartily as their distressing circumstances permitted.

The fate of the *Aboukir* and the *Hogue* made it evident to the officers of the *Cressy* that the disasters were not due to mines but to submarine attacks. Indeed, almost immediately after the

[1] Later appointed Captain of the light cruiser *Aurora*.

Hogue had been struck a periscope was seen sticking out of the water some 300 yards away. The telegraph on the bridge rang down to the engine-room for full speed ahead, the captain hoping to be able to ram the enemy. Almost simultaneously fire was opened, some say by one of the 9·2 guns. Whether the submarine was hit or not may never be known, for the gunner, Mr Dogherty, asserted that he hit both the periscope and the conning tower, while an officer was of opinion that the shell struck a piece of timber, a vast quantity of which was drifting about. The sailors on deck, to some of whom rifles had been served for service should the Germans show their heads above the conning tower, were certainly of opinion that the underwater craft had been damaged, for they gave expression to their feelings by vociferous shouting and clapping. According to the report of Commander Bertram W. L. Nicholson, this particular submarine "did not fire a torpedo at the *Cressy*."

Captain Robert W. Johnson, who had only taken over the command of the *Cressy* on the first of the previous month, then brought his vessel nearer to the two stricken ships. Everything portable and capable of floating was bundled overboard for the benefit of the unfortunates who could be seen far below struggling with the waves. While this task was proceeding another periscope was sighted. Fire was opened, and about a dozen shells were hurled in

the direction of the enemy, but it was too late to avert the speeding of the messenger of death. It had already issued from the submarine, and came gliding through the water, leaving a tell-tale trail of foam, and striking the starboard side of the *Cressy* just before the after bridge. A wireless operator was engaged in signalling that the *Aboukir* and the *Hogue* were sinking, and had just sufficient time to add "We are also struck," when the auxiliary engine either broke down or was destroyed, causing the electric light to fail and stopping the working of the wireless. At first it seemed to make no appreciable difference to the 'trim' of the ship, and it was hoped that as the water-tight doors were closed the blow would not prove fatal.

A second torpedo followed. This time the aim was not so good, and it passed harmlessly astern. About ten or fifteen minutes later another torpedo struck the starboard side of the cruiser in No. 5 boiler-room. "The men," said Lieutenant Harrison, "were as calm as at drill, and they behaved splendidly."

The vessel had already listed owing to the intake of water, but it now began to flow in more rapidly. "She heeled over to starboard very slowly," runs the official report, "a dense black smoke issuing from her when she attained an angle of about 90 degrees, and she took a long time from this angle till she floated bottom up with the starboard screw slightly

out of the water. I consider," adds Commander Norton, "it was 35 to 45 minutes from the time she was struck till she was bottom up."

By great good fortune a large target, officially known as Pattern Three, used for firing practice, floated off and afforded a valuable raft for many of the crew, particularly as the canvas was not stretched. The steam pinnace got clear of the wreck, but only to fill and sink, and a raft to which some of the men were clinging was found to be fastened to the *Cressy*. Not a man attempted to leave the wreck until the order was given: "Now, lads, save yourselves if you can." Their own boats were away, rescuing men from the *Aboukir* and the *Hogue*. Captain Johnson's last act was to drop his weighted secret code-books into the sea. Then he went down with the ship.

Wonderful stories of extraordinary coolness in the face of death are related. A cadet and a seaman shared a log between them. "We've got to carry on like this," the youngster told his comrade, "and if we die we shall die game." Then he asked: "What's the new chief engineer like?" One officer stuck to the ship until the waves of a choppy sea were breaking over her, and was subsequently saved after swimming about for a considerable time. A sailor managed to secure his ship's ensign, and although he was not picked up until he had been immersed for two hours, the treasure was still in his

grasp. On being rescued by a trawler and taken to a Dutch port, he used the flag as a counterpane to cover his cot.

An energetic midshipman of the *Aboukir* was highly indignant at the idea of being landed at a neutral port. He wanted to get another ship as soon as possible so as to fight the Germans! A sick-bay steward on the same cruiser, assisted by a few willing helpers, managed to get all the invalids off the ship and placed in a boat while the vessel was going down under them. The steward was saved, although he had to be accommodated at Shotley Hospital with an injured leg. Of three brothers who were on the *Cressy*, two were drowned. "Your sons' last thoughts were of you," wrote the survivor to his sorely stricken mother. "When the captain gave the orders, 'Every man save himself,' something happened which I shall never forget. Suddenly I ran against dear brother Alfred. The ship was sinking and the decks were awash, and the Germans were still firing their torpedoes at us, while the sea was literally alive with men struggling and grasping what they could to save themselves. We lingered one moment, shook hands, told each other whoever got saved to tell mother that our last thoughts were of her. Then we kissed each other, said good-bye, and plunged into the water together. We never saw one another again, nor could we see brother Louis. It was awful. I was in the water

two hours before being picked up." Cecil Kneller, a lad of fifteen and a drummer boy of the Royal Marines on the *Aboukir*, clutched an empty tub and held on for three hours until he was dragged into a boat. An officer who was swimming about told those whom he came across to keep their mouths shut and breathe through the nose. Those who were clinging to anything were urged to keep their legs in motion so as to maintain a good circulation and avoid cramp.

A Salvationist and another man had been swimming about and were on the verge of despair when they saw something floating near by. When they had grasped the wreckage it was only too evident that the spar was not sufficiently buoyant to support both of them. So they took it in turns, one man using it while the other swam, and *vice versa*. This was found to be very exhausting work, and it seemed as if both must eventually succumb. Realizing this, the Salvationist said as best he could : " Mate, death means life to me ; you are not converted, you hold on to the spar and save yourself ; I'll let go. Good-bye ! "

The chaplain of the *Cressy* could not swim, and was handed a lifebuoy, which he insisted on sharing with the Staff Surgeon. Each took it in turn to rub the other's legs. A sailor who escaped from the wreck of the *Aboukir* had nearly reached the *Hogue* when he saw her torpedoed. He was hauled

on board the *Cressy*, and had not been on deck for more than three minutes when she was struck. He dived again, and just before he was picked up passed a mate who had promised to wash a duck suit for him. "Good-bye, old pal," the other just managed to gasp, "I reckon your duck suit is dry!" and then disappeared. A lieutenant of the *Aboukir*, who had both his legs broken, was found lashed to a table; another man supported himself with the aid of an empty biscuit tin for nearly three hours. A cutter full of rescued men who were making for the *Cressy* narrowly missed being cut in two by one of the torpedoes which struck the cruiser. Five men clung to a table, but three eventually gave up the agonizing struggle for life, leaving only Captain Ozanne and Corporal T. Pilcher, of the Marines, to be rescued. They pushed the floating table toward the *Titan* when she appeared on the scene, and were hauled up by ropes.

A fair-haired young Briton of sixteen years, Midshipman W. S. Cazalet, of the *Cressy*, was the means of saving no fewer than eighty-eight lives. He was put in command of the cruiser's whaler. After picking up twenty-five men he transferred them to the picket boat of the *Hogue* and then went on with his work until he had rescued the number mentioned, which included Commander B. W. L. Nicholson. The Engineer Commander of the *Hogue* sustained a dislocation of the knee as a result of

the first explosion, and a fracture of the thigh-bone of his right leg when the cruiser was again struck. Yet he managed to keep his head above water for an hour and a half until he was lifted into a boat.

An able seaman of the *Hogue* named Farmstone voluntarily jumped overboard from the launch so that another might take his place, and could only be persuaded to come out of the water when all his comrades in the vicinity had been rescued. A typical example of the thought of the men for their wounded comrades was furnished when those in a cutter began to sing "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary." One of the crew noticed that a poor fellow was injured, so after the chorus was finished he started "Pull for the Shore, Sailor, pull for the Shore." When they had finished the man was dead.

After what must have seemed an eternity, some British and Dutch trawlers, and a number of destroyers which had picked up the wireless message sent out by the *Cressy*, came along. The Lowestoft trawlers *Coriander* and *J.G.C.* picked up many survivors, the former effecting the saving of 156 officers and men, and the latter of 34; the steamers *Flora* and *Titan*, both of Amsterdam, rescued 267 and 114 respectively, and H.M.S. *Lance*, H.M.S. *Lucifer*, and H.M.S. *Lowestoft* also assisted in the work. The last-mentioned, a light cruiser, reported having seen two enemy submarines, which dived, and although the *Lowestoft* and several destroyers steamed

over the spots in the hope that the underwater craft might be rammed, they were unsuccessful. It is pleasing to be able to record that each of the masters of the trawlers and steamships was awarded the silver medal of the Board of Trade for gallantry in saving life at sea, and monetary payments were also made to the skippers and crews of the *Coriander* and the *J.G.C.* In the following April the *Flora* went ashore on the Devon coast.

The Dutch people showed great kindness to the survivors; the commander of the port of Ymuiden at once telegraphed to the naval authorities at Amsterdam for a supply of woollen underwear, and true to their traditional hospitality, the inhabitants did everything possible to alleviate the sufferings of the exhausted sailors. At first they were removed to Gaasterland, in the province of Friesland, to be interned, but shortly afterward the following semi-official statement was issued from The Hague:—

"International agreements, according to which there can be no question of interning the rescued British sailors, were framed at the Peace Conference of 1907. Only if a battle had been fought inside Dutch territorial waters would the Dutch be authorized to intern the survivors. Article XV. of the Red Cross Convention prescribing internment has reference only to sailors landed by war vessels of belligerent Powers, but not to sailors who, as in this case, were landed by neutral merchant ships."

The men now became the guests of the Netherlands Government, and were almost immediately sent back to England.

According to the German newspapers, U 9 was the submarine solely responsible for the sinking of the British cruisers. In a personal narrative by the commander, which appeared in *The New York World*, Lieutenant-Captain Otto Weddingen stated that when he fired his first torpedo "at the middle ship" (the *Aboukir*) his craft was about twelve feet under water. "Her crew were brave," he adds, "and even with death staring them in the face they kept to their posts ready to handle their useless guns, for I submerged at once." The closing in of the *Hogue* enabled him to fire at the cruiser from much the same position as he had previously taken up. The writer asserts that the *Cressy* steamed a zigzag course as a precautionary measure, which made it necessary for him to get closer to his intended victim. Weddingen states that on coming to the surface he saw the ship's guns being fired 'wildly,' excusing this on the score that "they did not know where to shoot," and adding naïvely, "though one shot came unpleasantly near us." He also pays a compliment to the men of the *Cressy*: "All the while her men stayed at their guns looking for their invisible foe. They were brave, true to their country's sea traditions."

The bodies of many of the victims were washed

up on the coast of Holland and subsequently buried by the Dutch with military honours at Noordwyk.

No monument cut in stone or cast in bronze commemorates the 1400 men who surrendered their lives in the defence of Great Britain on that bleak morning in September, 1914. Their graves are unmarked, but Sir John Jellicoe has written their epitaph in these glowing words: "Nothing could have been finer than the coolness and courage shown in every case where ships have been sunk by mines or torpedoes. Discipline has been perfect, and men have gone to their deaths not only most gallantly but most unselfishly. I feel prouder every day that passes that I command such men."

CHAPTER X

HOW BRITONS FACED DEATH IN THE PACIFIC

THE weather was of the slate-grey variety termed 'dirty' by every British son of Neptune in whatsoever part of the world he may have the ill fortune to encounter it. Grey in sea and sky met the eyes of officers and sailors as they staggered along that portion of the deck of H.M.S. *Good Hope* that was not awash, stood at the guns ready for instant action, or occupied their stations in less exposed positions. Black and white relieved the monotony to some slight extent, but, being the parents of the sombre colour that seemed universal, appeared almost part and parcel of it. The great wreaths of smoke that slowly coiled from the funnels of the cruiser were black ; the sea-horses that crested the sullen-looking waves ere they dashed against the ship, partly scattering themselves in a myriad flying spears of spray, but mostly disappearing in floods on the other side, were white.

One man ventured to remark to his mate that Britain's steel grip was equal to the mailed fists of a dozen imperial sons of Satan. Whatever might have been the reply to this broadside of impolite wisdom remained unspoken. At that moment the

heavy steel door of a near-by cabin opened, and as swiftly slammed with a dull metallic ring as the flagship rolled from the angle it had assumed a few moments before to a similar angle in the opposite direction. It being in the nature of things for seamen to neglect nothing and observe everything, both looked in the direction from whence the noise had proceeded. Then they pulled themselves up as straight as the foremast, saluted, and met the searching yet kindly eyes of Sir Christopher Cradock, whose past career had won him the respect and admiration of every member of the ship, from stoker to captain. The date was Sunday, the 1st of November, 1914, the time two o'clock in the afternoon, and the Rear-Admiral had just been informed that one of the wireless operators had picked up a message in a strange code.

Cradock was no mere 'manœuvres man.' He had entered the Navy at the age of thirteen, and but fifteen years after our first ironclad had taken the water. He had seen active service in the Sudan in 1891, was present at the battle of Tokar and at the occupation of Afafit, and had been mentioned in dispatches. In the following year he was serving as first lieutenant on H.M.S. *Dolphin* and helped to rescue the crew of the ill-fated Brazilian warship *Barroza* when she foundered in a gale. Eight years later Cradock was commander of H.M.S. *Alacrity* and in charge of the British Naval Brigade which

did such splendid work at the storming and capture of the Taku Forts. He subsequently led the Allied forces which captured the Peiyang Arsenal, and relieved Tientsin and Sir Edward Seymour's column at Siku.

At mess some of the men of the *Good Hope* would spin yarns of the Rear-Admiral's other brave deeds; of how he had won the Royal Humane Society's testimonial for rescuing a drowning midshipman who had fallen overboard in the darkness in Palmas Bay, Sardinia, and of how he had helped to save life when the P. & O. liner *Delhi* had been wrecked off Cape Spartel in 1911. On this latter occasion he had been made a K.C.V.O. by the King, presented with the Silver Medal of the Board of Trade, and received the cordial appreciation of the Admiralty. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Flag-Lieutenant-Commander George E. Cumming, who was on Cradock's staff on the *Good Hope*, also wore the Silver Medal for similar work in connexion with the same disaster, in which the late Duke of Fife and the Princess Royal, with their two daughters, were involved.

When war was declared the *Good Hope* was patrolling the Irish coast. She was at no great distance from the Outer Hebrides when a message was received from the Admiralty ordering her to sweep the trade routes of the broad Atlantic for German cruisers that were known to be abroad. She found none, and proceeded to Halifax to coal. Shortly afterward

Sir Christopher Cradock transferred his flag from H.M.S. *Suffolk*, which had been carrying out similar duties, to the *Good Hope*. Thus she became the senior ship of a squadron which consisted, in addition to herself, of the *Monmouth*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Otranto*. Both the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were ships of the third line and manned by reservists who, previous to the outbreak of war, had followed civil occupations since leaving the Service, and were of necessity less hardy than the men of the *Glasgow*, which ship had been in South American waters for some time.

It is necessary for us to glance at a few rather technical but interesting particulars of the qualities of these fighting machines, otherwise the battle in which three of them played so gallant a part cannot be appreciated at its real worth.

The *Good Hope*, officially known as an armoured cruiser, had been a contribution to the Navy by the old Cape Colony in 1902. She was of 14,100 tons displacement, with a speed of 23 knots and an armament of two 9·2-in., sixteen 6-in., twelve 12-pr., two 3-pr., and six machine guns, and two submerged torpedo tubes. So far as the British public was concerned, the *Good Hope* was chiefly famous as the vessel which had taken Mr Joseph Chamberlain to South Africa on the conclusion of the Boer War of 1899–1902. That eminent statesman was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the choice of the ship was particularly appropriate. The *Good Hope*

had ploughed the seas for twelve years, and was therefore by no means a modern vessel in the sense of a term which is constantly undergoing revision as a period of time, particularly in regard to naval matters.

The *Monmouth* was an armoured cruiser of the County class, a Glasgow ship which left the yards completed in 1903. Her displacement was 9800 tons, her speed 23 knots, her armament fourteen 6-in., eight 12-pr., three 3-pr., eight machine guns, and two light guns, and she had also two submerged torpedo tubes. The *Glasgow* is a light cruiser of the type used for scouting purposes, and was built by the same firm that had constructed the *Good Hope*, which was eight years older. Her displacement is 4800 tons, her speed over 26 knots, her armament two 6-in., ten 4-in., one 12-pr., four 3-pr. guns, and two submerged torpedo tubes.

The *Otranto* is an auxiliary cruiser—that is to say, a liner commissioned for war service and lightly armed. Her displacement is 12,124 tons. She was well known to tourists to the Norwegian fiords, and was probably the largest British ship to pay visits to the Land of the Midnight Sun during the summer months previous to the Great War. The *Otranto* belongs to the Orient line, and was built at Belfast in 1909. For the purpose of making prizes of German merchantmen she was doubtless useful, but in the action that was about to take place she proved rather worse than useless. For these reasons : the

speed of a squadron is necessarily that of its slowest unit, and although the *Otranto* was driven by turbines, her utmost capacity was 18 knots only ; she presented a conspicuous target to the enemy, and the range and calibre of her guns were useless in a long-distance action.

From Halifax Cradock's ships had proceeded to Bermuda and the West Indies, and along the coasts of Venezuela and Brazil. Several times the stormy Horn, the scene of many an old-time exploit, was rounded, and the Falkland Islands were visited. They made "swoops upon wild and unsurveyed bays and places whither we had heard the enemy had gone to coal, etc., but failed to find them there, although we heard their secret and friendly wireless stations talking in code." Thus wrote an officer in the *Glasgow*. The men experienced the extremes of heat and cold, sweating like fat bulls of Bashan in some latitudes and shivering at Terra del Fuego and in the infamous Magellan Straits. Some of the officers were perfectly well aware that the five German cruisers of Admiral Von Spee's Pacific Squadron, the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig*, *Dresden*, and *Nürnberg*, were 'somewhere about' and outclassed them in guns, but no British sailor has been known to admit that he could be outclassed in seamanship. On the lower deck there was a belief that the contestants would prove to be three light cruisers only. Perhaps the *Nürnberg* and the *Dresden*,

which had been in the Atlantic, had come together and joined the *Leipzig*, last heard of in the North Pacific. Thus they argued. It seemed scarcely probable that all five had concentrated and were bearing down on the British squadron. These and other more or less plausible suggestions were ventured as the men discussed the possibility of 'something happening.' As to the progress of the war in the other hemisphere, the brave Jack Tars knew practically nothing. It is pathetic to read in the letters some of them sent home of the dreary monotony, the lack of news, and of the ice and snow and blazing heat that discomfited them. Not a few of the writers thought that the Admiralty could have sent a more imposing force, as was most assuredly the case, as the contemporary Dardanelles operations proved, but none of those I have read conveys the slightest notion of 'funk.' "We will fight cheerfully whatever odds we may have to face," are the words of the Admiral's secretary. "Five German cruisers against us," writes Surgeon Searle, of the *Good Hope*. "What's the betting on the field? Pray to your Penates we may prevent them concentrating." "We have travelled 10,000 miles hunting for the *Dresden*," asserts a stoker on the *Monmouth*. "We will 'bust' her or sink. If we meet with bad luck, you will know all on the *Monmouth* died game, and that your son has done his duty to his country, pleased with the honour."

In the fulfilment of the hope expressed by Surgeon Searle lay the main chance of the squadron. Should one or two of these German vessels be missing all might be well. Together the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had sixteen 8·2-in. guns, each firing 275-lb. shells, twelve of which could be brought to bear on the broadside, twelve 6-in. guns, and forty 24-pr. guns, whereas the British had in all only two 9·2-in. guns, firing 380-lb. shells, thirty-two 6-in. guns, and ten 4-in. guns. So far as long range and weight of metal were concerned the chances against Cradock's ships were consequently more than four to one. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were sister ships, the newest of their class, and were superior in armoured protection as well as in ordnance. Both were launched in 1906 and had a displacement of 11,600 tons. The three light cruisers, all launched between 1905 and 1907, varied from 3250 to 3650 tons displacement, and each had ten 4·1-in. and two 1-pr. guns, with two torpedo tubes.

The First Sea Lord, in London, 10,000 miles away, had sent a battleship to strengthen the squadron, provided, of course, that it arrived in time. It did not do so, but was sufficiently near for the Admiral to send her a wireless just before he went into action. This was the slow and virtually obsolete *Canopus*, whose principal ordnance is four 12-in. and twelve 6-in. guns.

On this same Sunday, but earlier in the day, the

light cruiser *Glasgow* had left Coronel, Chile, from which place the battle which was to ensue takes its name. At 2 P.M., while on her way to rejoin the other ships at the appointed rendezvous, she received a signal from the *Good Hope* "that apparently from wireless calls there was an enemy ship to northward," to quote the captain's report. This was the secret of the message in a strange code already referred to. At 4.20 P.M. those on the look-out sighted smoke on the horizon. After drawing close enough to ascertain the nationality of the ship from whence the smoke emanated, the *Glasgow* put on full steam and made in the direction of the British squadron. Captain John Luce at once informed the Admiral of the approach of two armoured cruisers and one small cruiser—in reality there were three—at the same time warning all vessels in sight. Apparently Cradock received a coherent message, although the Germans endeavoured to break in with their own installations and so cause confusion. In due course the *Monmouth* and the *Otranto* were discovered, and at five o'clock the *Good Hope* was sighted.

Two alternatives, and two only, presented themselves to Sir Christopher Cradock. It may be that in speaking thus we are doing an injustice to the memory of a very gallant gentleman, because it is possible, and indeed probable, that to his mind there was no alternative other than conflict. The alternatives, fancied or real, were these : he could fight the

enemy and suffer defeat, or he could await the coming of the *Canopus* and then endeavour to bring him to battle. To the first there was the hope that he might inflict loss or severe damage on some of the light cruisers, if not on the heavier men-of-war ; to the second there was the likelihood of the Germans escaping him altogether and carrying on a one-sided war against British commerce.

Forming into line-ahead, his own vessel first, the *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* following in the order mentioned, Cradock led his ships into battle. This was a few minutes after a quarter to six o'clock, when the Germans, having turned south, were in single line-ahead, the two big cruisers leading. The contestants were then twelve miles apart, the distance being gradually reduced as the ships worked up to 17 knots. Half an hour later, when von Spee's squadron was 15,000 yards away, the Admiral wired to the *Canopus* : " I am going to attack enemy now." Had the range not been too great, this was Cradock's opportunity to open fire, for the sun was slowly setting behind the British squadron, showing up the enemy ships with great distinctness and therefore trying to the eyes of the German gunners. Cradock endeavoured to shorten the distance between his squadron and that of the enemy, but von Spee effectively precluded this manœuvre. Not a shot was fired until 7.3 P.M., when the sun had disappeared and the British ships were silhouetted

against the golden after-glow. Fortune thus favoured von Spee, and he fired salvos and speedily got the correct range.

Not a single condition was helpful to Cradock. It was blowing almost a gale, with a lumpy sea, and firing was made difficult for the main deck guns—the only ones that really mattered—of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* because of the heavy spray that was flung over the bows. Almost the first order of the Admiral after the action had begun was to signal the captain of the *Otranto* to get out of the firing line, and she made off in the direction of the south-west. According to one report, she was steaming badly and hampered the movements of her consorts. It is also said, perhaps incorrectly, that Cradock issued similar instructions to the *Glasgow*, which her captain disregarded.

It is impossible to describe the battle off Coronel with complete accuracy, because the logs of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were not written up that day, and unfortunately never will be. A description of what happened must therefore be based on the dispatch of Captain Luce, which is by no means a lengthy one, as issued by the Admiralty, the communications of those who served on the surviving ships, and the report of Admiral Maximilian Count von Spee as it appeared in the German newspapers. They differ in detail and sometimes in essentials. For instance, Captain Luce states that the enemy

opened fire at 12,000 yards, whereas von Spee says about 15,000 yards, and a participant on board the *Glasgow* makes it 12,300 yards. Again, a wireless operator on the *Otranto* asserts that firing did not begin until 7.15. Bearing in mind the difficulties of the situation, let us endeavour to arrive at the main facts.

We can readily believe with a member of the crew of the *Otranto* that "if there is a hell of fire it must be a naval battle." Almost immediately after the first flash from the enemy's guns the *Good Hope*, *Monmouth* and *Glasgow* responded, each ship engaging the one opposite to it. According to von Spee, the British ships suffered more from the heavy seas than those under his command, the vessels on both sides rolling and pitching heavily, particularly the light cruisers. "Observation and range-finding work," he asserts, "was most difficult, the seas sweeping over the forecastles and conning towers and preventing the use of some guns on the middle decks, the crews of which were never able to see the sterns of their opponents, and only occasionally their bows." It is obvious that similar conditions obtained in the British squadron. The Admiral makes special mention of the gunnery of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, the two large armoured cruisers, which "were well served." He adds that the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* "were practically covered by our fire," a statement corroborated by British eye-witnesses, and that "so



The "Good Hope" going down
NORMAN WILKINSON

far as can be ascertained at present"—there has been no subsequent report—his flagship was only hit twice and the *Gneisenau* four times. Each of the big German cruisers concentrated six of their 8·2-in. guns on the *Good Hope*, the smaller ships being outranged at the beginning of the fight.

The third salvo from the enemy set fire to the fore-part of both the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, and very soon the fore-turret of the former was well ablaze. The flames were apparently got under after what must have been almost incredible exertion on the part of the crews, for shells were screeching all around them. Both ships again caught fire, and remained blazing away until 7.45. The pale light of the moon made but a sorry show compared with the fierce light of the burning cruisers. According to von Spee, the fore single turret of the *Good Hope* was carried away, and the *Scharnhorst* reckoned that she had scored no fewer than thirty-five hits on Cradock's flagship. The only guns on the British flagship capable of making effective reply had been her two 9·2-in. guns, her 6-in. guns being rendered almost useless by the height of the waves and the low line at which her secondary ordnance was placed. It is said that when the vessel rolled they were almost awash, and that when Cradock realized that he could do no further damage to the enemy he deliberately attempted to get closer to his antagonists, so as to draw their fire and thus afford some measure

of protection to his other ships. At ten minutes to eight an explosion lit up the darkness and the sullen sea, and flames two hundred feet high shot up amidships of the *Good Hope*. Thus ended her first and last fight, and what remained of her disappeared with her whole gallant company.

Meanwhile what had happened to the *Monmouth*? After the outbreak of fire she sheered off the line, but managed to get back to it, notwithstanding the avalanche of shells that was gradually reducing her floating capacity to that of a sieve. Her 6-in. guns fired from time to time, her only mark the flashes that came from the enemy. She was already sinking and down by the bow, and the captain therefore endeavoured to get her stern to sea, so as to reduce the intake of water. Very soon it was apparent that she was completely out of control, and as the *Glasgow* passed her the crew could be seen assembled at the stern. The brave fellows, knowing that there was no possibility of escape, and that within a short time a watery grave would embrace them, gave three hearty British cheers.

By the rising moon the enemy ships could be seen drawing on the remaining vessel of the squadron. In order to avoid certain destruction and to warn the *Canopus*, the *Glasgow* proceeded at full speed in a west-north-westerly direction, steering for the Magellan Straits. To have remained would have been certain suicide, and no officer is called upon to sacrifice his

ship and his men for the mere sake of fighting or from any false sense of patriotism. As it was, the light cruiser had had several narrow escapes. A shell just missed the sick-bay and came hurtling through the captain's cabin, rendering it almost unrecognizable, a hole was torn in one of the funnels, and a great gash made in the lower coal bunker necessitated the use of the pumps to keep the water under. An officer calculated that about 600 shells were aimed at the *Glasgow*.

Although the searchlights of the pursuing vessels swept the sea, the engineers and stokers managed to get 27·8 knots out of her, notwithstanding her condition and the rough sea, and she gradually drew off. "The three days' flight in which the *Glasgow* was getting away from them," writes one who was on her, "will never be forgotten by anyone on board, and if anybody deserves promotion in the *Glasgow* it is the officers and men of the engineering and carpentry branches. Nobody would believe the speed we maintained for forty-eight hours." The stokers, working considerably harder than the proverbial nigger, sang "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" and "We'll All go the Same Way Home" during the action. At ten minutes to nine the Germans were lost in the darkness, but half an hour later flashes of fire showed that they were still concentrating on the helpless *Monmouth*. It has been stated by one who observed the battle that, despite her crippled and sinking

condition, the former ship "went back to fight—to cover our escape," that she "stood the rub while we were getting away." This tallies with von Spee's statement that "the *Nürnberg* came across the *Monmouth*," which, badly damaged, crossed her bows and then tried to come alongside. "At 8.58," the Admiral adds, "the *Nürnberg* sank her by a bombardment at point-blank range"—hence the flashes observed from the *Glasgow*. "The *Monmouth* did not reply, but she went down with her flag flying."

While we can readily believe with the German Admiral that "there was no chance of saving anybody owing to the heavy sea," it is difficult to credit the statement that the *Nürnberg* "sighted smoke and believed that another enemy ship was approaching, which she prepared to attack." At the same time it is only just to cite the evidence of the captain of the French barque *Valentine* regarding the sinking of the *Good Hope*, which von Spee says his small cruisers were unable to find. The *Valentine* was sunk by one of von Spee's ships within half a mile of Juan Fernandez, the volcanic group of islands associated with Alexander Selkirk, on whose exploits Defoe is said to have based his story of Robinson Crusoe. She was consequently in Chilian territorial waters, and the Germans therefore violated the neutrality of the republic. According to a United Press correspondent, the captain swore before a public notary that while he was a prisoner aboard

one of the cruisers he heard Germans assert that numerous British sailors were seen swimming after the destruction of Cradock's flagship, that they could have been saved, but the enemy allowed them to drown. It should be remembered, however, that when a ship is in action the boats are not on davits and are usually filled with water, and that consequently they are not readily available. Certainly on this particular occasion it is doubtful whether rescue work could have been safely undertaken owing to the bad weather. Von Spee was a worthy enemy, as the following story will prove. It is related by the Hon. W. Allardyce, ex-Governor of the Falkland Islands, and now Governor of the Bahamas. He had been told that after the battle the German colony at Valparaiso gave a banquet to celebrate the victory. When the final toast of "Damnation to the British Navy" was proposed the German Admiral jumped up and said that neither he nor his officers would respond, and they at once withdrew. The steps near the doors were covered with flowers, and von Spee remarked as he saw them: "I think you had better keep these for my grave. They may be wanted."

In his report Captain John Luce, of the *Glasgow*, whose name will always be held in honour for the valiant part he played, says: "Nothing could have been more admirable than conduct of officers and men throughout. Though it was most trying to

receive great volume of fire without chance of returning it adequately, all kept perfectly cool, there was no wild firing, and discipline was the same as at battle practice.

"When target ceased to be visible, gun-layers spontaneously ceased fire.

"The serious reverse sustained has entirely failed to impair the spirit of officers and ship's company, and it is our unanimous wish to meet the enemy again as soon as possible."

Von Spee states that the fire of the *Glasgow* was "harmless," and gives the number of casualties on the *Gneisenau* as "two slightly wounded" and none on the small cruisers, while any losses on the *Scharnhorst* are ignored. The *Glasgow*, after eluding the enemy, put in at Rio de Janeiro, where she was repaired by permission of the Brazilian Government, who gave her a stated time for the purpose. How efficiently this task was carried out, and what excellent work she performed in the battle off the Falkland Islands on the following 8th of December, when von Spee met with retribution, will be told in the following chapter.

We have seen that Sir Christopher Cradock's defeat was almost a foregone conclusion before so much as a shot was fired. One at least of the German papers, the Berlin *Allgemeine Zeitung*, paid a fitting compliment to the 1654 men who met death so gallantly on that cheerless November evening.

While making the most of the victory, the writer adds: "On the other hand we, too, must recognize, if the present reports are confirmed, that the British ships strove to the last moment to keep their colours flying, and that the cruiser *Monmouth* in her own extremity tried her best to take with her beneath the waves a German ship. The naval victory in Chilian waters is the more valuable because it was gained over a courageous enemy."

Of the crew of the *Good Hope* four alone were saved, and for no other reason than that they had the good fortune to be on an island doing look-out duties when the battle was fought. A Chilian transport and the Red Cross steamers *Valdivia* and *Chiloe* were dispatched to search for possible survivors, but they found neither sailors nor wreckage. A few weeks later British bluejackets on one of the British battle cruisers that exacted retribution for the loss of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* fired a volley over the spot where their comrades perished.

A fine and gallant story!

Their unblanched lips drank up
Death from the sea:
They quaffed this loving cup,
England to thee.

CHAPTER XI

COUNT VON SPEE'S LAST FIGHT

THREE days before the names of Sir Christopher Cradock and his band of heroes were added to Britain's ever-lengthening Roll of Honour, a little man of grim visage hurried up the steps of the huge block of buildings known as the Admiralty. A few people who happened to be passing recognized the trim figure, the ashen-grey and purposeful face, and the slightly stooping shoulders as the outward and visible signs of the most dominating personality of modern naval history. The door shut behind Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone. When he reached his room a few minutes later his second administration as First Sea Lord had begun.

He struck his first blow on the 8th of the following December, not in the North Sea as so many folk had anticipated, but in the South Atlantic, off the coast of Argentina, and far removed from the main theatre of war. When he received news of Cradock's disaster he went quietly to work to avenge the loss of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, choosing for his purpose Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Charles Doveton Sturdee, K.C.B., C.M.G., C.V.O., Chief of



Lord Fisher at the Admiralty
S. Begg

the War Staff at the Admiralty, and the ships *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Bristol*, *Glasgow*, *Canopus*, and *Macedonia*, some of which were already near the scene of the intended operations. Nelson said, "Only numbers can annihilate," a maxim dear to the heart of Lord Fisher. Two battle cruisers, one battleship, three armoured cruisers, two light cruisers, and an armed liner were provided for the purpose. Sturdee was given what poor Cradock had lacked—speed and heavy armament. To von Spee's broadside of six 8·2-in. guns on the *Scharnhorst*, hurling 1650 lb. of metal, Sturdee could make reply with eight 12-in. guns firing 6800 lb. In speed the British Admiral's flagship, the *Invincible*, was 2½ knots faster than the *Scharnhorst*.

Although there were many spies in Great Britain at the time, it is very evident that not a single member of the German Secret Service had the faintest suspicion that the ships which suddenly left the region of the British Isles and as suddenly appeared some thousands of miles away were anywhere but at their appointed stations. Certainly von Spee did not know, although he must have anticipated that retribution would be exacted sooner or later.

Since the battle off Coronel the inhabitants of the rugged Falkland Islands, which lie about 250 miles east of the mainland of South America, had

not been at all easy in their minds by reason of their isolation and the menace of von Spee. At any moment the German ships might appear on the horizon, the wireless station would be destroyed as a matter of course, and for all they knew men, women and children would be put to the sword. "For days all sorts of rumours were afloat," writes Mr E. M. Sampson, who was at East Falkland, the largest of the group of over 100 islands, to the London *Daily Chronicle*. "It was generally expected that the German squadron would bombard the port and land. The governor, a fine type of a man, ordered defensive works to be created, and I took a hand at the job. We worked night and day and got everything prepared for them. The women-folk were sent miles away for protection, and guards of all kinds were posted. The *Canopus* was really the only fighting vessel we had in the harbour, but we were assured that a British squadron would certainly come to our aid. On Sunday, December 6, we got a wireless to say that we might expect a surprise, or rather that is what we could hear on all hands, and on the following day the British squadron hove in sight, and the cheering they got from us Britishers would have made a lump rise in your throat if you had been here."

The ships at once proceeded to take in coal, and the task was finished not a moment too soon, for early on the morning of the 8th the enemy ships

were sighted from the top of a hill by a member of the local Volunteer force, and the information signalled to Admiral Sturdee. It is said that when the flag-lieutenant, clad in pyjamas, informed the Admiral that the enemy was in sight, Sir Frederick Sturdee stopped his shaving for half a minute and calmly remarked : " Well, you had better go and get dressed, and we'll see about it later." His first order was for the crews to have breakfast.

At the moment the *Macedonia*, to outward appearance a harmless liner, was at anchor at the mouth of the bay serving as a look-out ship, the *Kent* and the battle cruisers the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* were at Port William, and the remaining vessels at Port Stanley, or, as we may term them, the outer and the inner harbour respectively. It was of the utmost importance that von Spee should be kept in ignorance of the presence of the battle cruisers until Sturdee was ready for his coup. Word was accordingly passed down to the engine-room that steam was to be raised with oil fuel, which emits the filthiest smoke imaginable. It soon came pouring out of the giant funnels in mammoth wreaths that filled the harbour and for a time effectually screened everything from view. Down below in each ship the stokers worked with a will to raise steam for full speed in the shortest possible time. Every tick of the engine-room clock seemed to increase the tension. The black gang took on

added dignity, for they alone could prevent the escape of the Germans. Then the *Kent* slowly left her moorings and stationed herself at the entrance to the bay.

When the leading enemy ships, the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg*, were within range, the *Canopus* fired across the low neck of land. They turned away, shortly afterward altering their course so as to engage the *Kent*. While this was being done they apparently discerned the battle cruisers, for the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* made off in the direction of their consorts to seek safety in flight. The *Glasgow* then emerged from her hiding-place and joined the *Kent* in order that von Spee's movements might be kept under further observation. Five minutes afterward the main squadron, with the exception of the *Bristol*, steamed out, the *Carnarvon* leading, followed by the *Inflexible*, the *Invincible* (flagship), and the *Cornwall*. The weather conditions were perfect—clear, calm and sunshiny, with a light breeze. They were therefore in marked contrast to those which obtained when Cradock gave battle off Coronel.

When the *Invincible* poked her inquisitive nose out of harbour the rear ship of the enemy was seventeen miles away. Then began a chase lasting for over two hours. The battle cruisers forged ahead and speedily overtook the *Kent*, but just before going into action they slowed down, so that all might

take up their allotted stations. Mrs Roy Felton, watching the progress of the race from a hill, saw two enemy colliers coming from the direction of Cape Horn. She telephoned to the authorities, who sent the news by wireless to the British Admiral. The *Bristol* and the armed auxiliary *Macedonia* were detailed to deal with them. They promptly removed the crews of the colliers and sank the ships. For her patriotic service the lady was presented with a piece of plate by the Admiralty.

At 12.47 P.M. Sir Frederick Sturdee ordered the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Glasgow* to "Open fire and engage the enemy." The *Inflexible* let fly from her fore-turret at the *Leipzig*, followed by the *Invincible*, which also made a target of the light cruiser. The latter soon began to drop astern. The firing was altogether too fast and furious for comfort. Together with the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden* she turned away to the south-west, hoping to escape. Immediately the *Kent*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Cornwall* steamed off in the same direction.

The battle cruisers and the *Carnarvon* now transferred their attention to von Spee's flagship and the *Gneisenau*. When the range was ascertained after another chase due to change of course, Admiral Sturdee signalled "God save the King," and the 'great grey wolves of the sea' opened fire at a distance of about seven miles, speedily setting the *Scharnhorst* ablaze forward, and causing the reply

of her guns to slacken. The *Gneisenau* was also wounded. By 3.30 the third funnel of the *Scharnhorst* was shot away. The effect of the fire on this vessel, says Sir Frederick Sturdee, "became more and more apparent in consequence of smoke from fires, and also escaping steam ; at times a shell would cause a large hole to appear in her side, through which could be seen a dull red glow of flame. At 4.4 P.M. the *Scharnhorst*, whose flag remained flying to the last, suddenly listed heavily to port, and within a minute it became clear that she was a doomed ship ; for the list increased very rapidly until she lay on her beam-ends, and at 4.17 P.M. she disappeared." Admiral von Spee went down with his flagship, and his two sons also perished. The 22nd German Navy casualty list consisted of the names of 877 officers and men missing from the *Scharnhorst.*

The *Invincible* was hit by several shells, and a hole was made on the stokers' mess deck, above the water-line. One shell dropped almost vertically, and exploded in the Admiral's store, where it did no vital damage. All her injuries were of a minor character and soon repaired. Her gunners had been firing on and off for about five hours.

The consort of the German flagship continued to put up a spirited defence, although she was now subjected to the full fury of the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Carnarvon.* The forward funnel was

bowled over ; the flashes from her armament became more fitful. By 5.30 her engines had stopped, steam was pouring from her escape pipes, fires were evident in a dozen different parts of the ship, smoke belched forth and hung like a canopy above the stricken vessel. Apparently a single gun only remained workable, and spluttered at intervals. The Germans were 'game' to the last. Ten minutes after Admiral Sturdee had given the order to cease fire the *Gneisenau* heeled over and lay for a minute on her beam-ends. Then she sank like a stone.

Everything possible was done to rescue the crew, some 600 of whom had been killed or wounded during this contest of giants. Scores were numbed by the icy water and disappeared, but as many as possible were lifted into boats sent by the British ships, while others were saved by life-buoys and other articles that were flung overboard. On the battle cruisers officers and men rubbed the survivors with towels to stimulate the circulation, gave them every comfort they could think of, put them in blankets, treated them as gallant gentlemen. "The men and officers we picked up were stiff as pieces of wood in the freezing water," notes one who was engaged in the work of rescue. Some died while they were being brought in, and were buried at sea with full military honours. Thus does Britain honour the gallant dead, whether friend or enemy. After the first sharp sting of defeat had disappeared,

two of the German officers amused themselves by working out the details of the fight with matches to represent the various ships, and another congratulated the gunnery officer of the *Inflexible* on his rapid rate of fire and the number of hits he made.

Much had happened in the encounter of the light cruisers. In the pursuit of the enemy vessels the gallant little *Glasgow*, as though eager to wipe out the stain of the action off Coronel, drew ahead of the *Cornwall* and the *Kent*. At three o'clock her 6-in. guns began to speak in no uncertain language to the *Leipzig*. Her object was to endeavour to outrange that ship "and thus cause her to alter her course and give the *Cornwall* and the *Kent* a chance of coming into action."

About 7.15 the *Leipzig* was *hors de combat*, "on fire from stem to stern and like a sieve," says a sailor on the *Cornwall*, although she remained afloat until nine o'clock. When the signal officer of the *Glasgow* shouted out that a wireless had been received from the Admiral, saying that both the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were sunk, so loud were the cheers that the enemy must have understood what had happened.

Those who manned the *Glasgow's* boats beheld an awful sight. "She was like a glowing furnace, and as it was getting dark it showed up more," says one of the seamen. "We played our searchlights on her, and we could see some men up the only mast standing. She gave three slight heaves to port and



The "Nürnberg" sinking
MONTAGUE DAWSON

then turned completely upside down, sinking with only just a hiss of steam and a bubble. The men remaining jumped over the side and we picked them up. We got five officers and eleven men, and the *Cornwall* one officer and three men, all that were left of 368."

Meanwhile the *Kent* had fixed her grip on the *Nürnberg* after a long chase, for the enemy ship was the faster of the two. Yet the black squad managed by dint of extraordinary exertions to work up her engines to a couple of knots above their designed speed, and thus gradually overtook the retreating cruiser. Ladders were hacked to pieces, every available door and fitting, arm-chair and table was broken up to provide fuel for the furnaces. Within an hour and a half the *Kent* had brought her antagonist to a standstill and set her on fire. "It was a single-ship action," says the captain, "as no other ship was in sight at the time. The chase commenced at noon and the action commenced at five P.M. After a sharp action, during which the *Kent* was struck by the enemy's shell no less than thirty-six times, the *Nürnberg* sank at 7.26 P.M. . . . From the time the enemy was sighted until the end of the action the behaviour of the officers and men of the *Kent* was perfectly magnificent." The German ensign was hauled down, yet a little group of men waved a flag as she took the plunge. Captain Schönberg is reported to have said at Honolulu : "The *Nürnberg*

will very likely be our coffin, but we are ready to fight to the last." Of the twelve men rescued only seven survived, while the *Kent* had four killed and twelve wounded. A cause of much grief on the part of the crew was the loss of the ship's pet canary. It disappeared, cage and all. The silk ensign presented by the county after which the cruiser was named was reduced to ribbons.

It was on this ship that Sergeant Charles Mayes performed a splendid act of bravery, for which he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. The deed is thus set forth in *The London Gazette*: "A shell burst and ignited some cordite charges in the casemate; a flash of flame went down the hoist into the ammunition passage. Sergeant Mayes picked up a charge of cordite and threw it away. He then got hold of a hose-pipe and flooded the compartment, extinguishing the fire in some empty shell-bags which were burning. The extinction of this fire saved a disaster which might have led to the loss of the ship."

In his dispatch to the Admiralty Sir Frederick Sturdee pays a well-deserved tribute to the British crews. "I have pleasure," he says, "in reporting that the officers and men under my orders carried out their duties with admirable efficiency and coolness, and great credit is due to the Engineer Officers of all the ships, several of which exceeded their normal full speed."

A stoker on the same ship not only underwent the trying experiences of the Falkland Islands battle, but had been in the *Oravia* when she was lost, in the *Olympic* when she collided with the evil-starred *Hawke*, only just missed sailing in the *Titanic* because of illness, and was one of the crew of the *Pathfinder*, which was sunk by a submarine on the 5th of the previous September. The total British casualties amounted to seven killed and twelve wounded. No officers were killed or wounded. The Germans lost nearly 2200 officers and men.

Toward the end of the afternoon the weather changed. The sky became overcast and cloudy, the sea choppy. Moreover, the visibility was much reduced, and under cover of the gathering darkness the *Dresden* managed to escape. She remained at large until the 14th of the following March. In avoiding capture she proved herself entirely worthy of her sister ship, the *Emden*, although she did nothing like the amount of damage, and when she was at last cornered she put up but a half-hearted fight. She was caught by the *Glasgow*, the *Kent*, and the auxiliary cruiser *Orama* near Juan Fernandez Island. The action was one of the shortest on record. It lasted five minutes. The *Dresden* then hauled down her colours and displayed the white flag. Shortly after the crew had left their ship her magazine exploded and she disappeared. Fifteen badly wounded Germans were landed at Valparaiso, the

remainder of the crew being conveyed in a Chilian cruiser to the Quiriquina Islands, north of Coronel. A pig from the *Dresden* became the mascot of one of the British warships, and was duly decorated with a cardboard replica of the Iron Cross.

The action was afterward made the subject of protest on the part of the Chilian Government. It was pointed out that the *Dresden* had put in at Juan Fernandez to repair, her commander requesting that she might be allowed eight days for the purpose. He was given twenty-four hours in which to leave, and as he did not go he was notified by the Maritime Governor that his ship would be interned. At this juncture the British ships arrived, and when she was ordered to surrender the crew blew up the magazine.

Sir Edward Grey answered that so far as his information went "the *Dresden* had not accepted internment, and still had her colours flying and her guns trained," which probably led the captain of the *Glasgow* to assume, "especially in view of the past action of the *Dresden*, that she was defying the Chilian authorities and abusing Chilian neutrality, and was only awaiting a favourable opportunity to sally out and attack British commerce again." At the same time his Majesty's Government offered a full and ample apology. It was afterward stated unofficially that the action took place about twelve miles off Robinson Crusoe's island.

The King sent a message to the Admiral and the officers and men under his command, congratulating them on their victory, General French offered the felicitations of the Army in France, the Board of Admiralty wired their thanks, the brilliant success and bravery of the British Navy was enthusiastically applauded by M. Victor Augagneur, the French Minister of Marine, the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia spoke of "the splendid exploit of the British Fleet," from the Sudan the Sirdar sent his hearty acknowledgment of services rendered, and in Melbourne the House of Assembly gave three hearty cheers. To the felicitations of Vice-Admiral R. Yashiro, the Japanese Minister of Marine, Mr Winston Churchill replied at some length. The First Lord made it evident that had von Spee turned westward again the victory would doubtless have fallen to the Japanese and Australian squadrons, which were coming from the north in the general combination.

"With the sinking of *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg*," he said, "the whole of the German squadron based on Tsingtau at the outbreak of the war has been destroyed, and that base itself reduced and captured.[1] This event marks the conclusion of the active operations in which the Allied Fleets have been engaged in the Pacific for more than four months, and though it has fallen to a

[1] Tsingtau fell on the 7th November, 1914.

British squadron in the South Atlantic to strike the final blow, it is largely owing to the powerful and untiring assistance rendered by the Japanese Fleet that this result has been achieved." The message concluded with an expression of "our earnest recognition of the invaluable naval assistance of Japan."

Addressing the House of Commons, the First Lord referred to the battle off the Falkland Islands as "a memorable event, the relief and advantage of which will only be fully appreciated by those who have full knowledge of all that has taken place. The strain in the early months of the war has been greatly diminished now by the abatement of distant convoy work and by the clearance of the enemy's flag from the seas and oceans. There were times when, for instance, the great Australian convoy of sixty ships was crossing the Indian Ocean, or the great Canadian convoy of forty ships, with its protecting squadrons, was crossing the Atlantic, or when the regular flow of large Indian convoys of forty or fifty ships sailing in company was at its height both ways; when there was a powerful German cruiser squadron still at large in the Pacific or the Atlantic, which had to be watched for or waited for in superior force in six or seven different parts of the world at once, and when all the time, within a few hours' steam of our own shores, there was concentrated a hostile fleet which many have

argued in former times was little inferior to our own, when there was hardly a regular soldier left at home, and before the Territorial Force and the new armies had attained their present high efficiency and power—there were times when our naval resources, considerable as they are, were drawn upon to their utmost limit. But the victory at the Falkland Islands swept all these difficulties out of existence; it set free a large force of cruisers and battleships for all purposes; it opened the way to other operations of great interest. It enabled a much stricter control and more constant outlook to be maintained in home waters, and it almost entirely freed the outer seas of danger."

When the men in the trenches of France and Flanders heard of the destruction of the *Scharnhorst*, the *Gneisenau*, and the *Leipzig* no time was lost in informing their opponents. One enterprising Tommy scribbled the news on a scrap of paper, enclosed it in a parcel with a brick, and hurled it at the Huns. A little while later they were informed of the destruction of the *Nürnberg*, the intelligence being chalked up on a board.

On his return to England Sir Frederick Sturdee was received in audience by the King, and gave his Majesty his personal account of the action. He then went to his home at Droxford, in the heart of leafy Hampshire, where he spent eighteen hours, a portion of which he devoted to paying a visit to

the wounded soldiers at Corhampton Park. Immediately afterward he returned to active service with the Grand Fleet. "We are prepared," he said, "to sacrifice ourselves for the freedom of mankind, and we are ready to shed the last drop of our blood to redeem Belgium." Sir Frederick was made a baronet in the New Year's honours of 1916.

When the Admiral was a captain the Germans were intriguing at Samoa, and his ship happened to be there at the time. He issued a proclamation to the effect that if either they or the natives interfered with the constituted authority he would bombard the town and the German cruiser *Falke*. Sturdee then ordered his ship to be cleared for action. The intriguers climbed down without more ado. He wiped out that long-standing score on the 8th of December 1914 in the battle off the Falkland Islands.

The long elephantine stretch of land known territorially as Chili and Argentina, with the tip of its trunk marked by Cape Horn and its mouth by the Rio de la Plata, became suddenly important to every Briton in the closing months of the year of the Great Betrayal. It seemed to be altogether beyond the range of the conflict; yet Coronel on the one side, and the Falkland Islands on the other, developed into something more than mere geographical expressions, meaningless enough to the average man. From them a British defeat and a

British victory took their names. Until the sea gives up its dead Sir John Cradock and his comrades will repose in the waters of the Pacific, while the waves of the South Atlantic will swing to and fro like grass before the wind above the graves of Count von Spee and the men who helped him to vanquish his foe and were so speedily vanquished themselves.

If blood be the price of Admiralty,
Lord God, we have paid in full.

CHAPTER XII

WITH BEATTY OFF THE DOGGER BANK

JUST as Sturdee's victory off the Falkland Islands was the sequel to Cradock's defeat off Coronel, so the action off the Dogger Bank on the morning of Sunday, the 24th January 1915, was the sequel to the futile bombardment of Great Yarmouth by a German squadron on the 3rd of the previous November, and the murderous shelling of the Hartlepools and of Scarborough on the 16th of the following month. On the occasion of the second raid several hundred casualties were recorded. Children going to school and boys and girls playing in the streets were killed by the cruisers of an enemy apparently devoid of every humane instinct, and 'out to win' by any and every method, legitimate or otherwise. To the Germans the end always justifies the means. A relic of the Crimea, an old Russian 64-pr., guarded the Yorkshire seaside resort; a battery of more or less obsolete weapons, manned by Territorials in a fort of miniature dimensions, constituted the sole armament of the two seaports. These ruthless proceedings of the German Navy gave the lie direct to the oily words and pie-crust promises of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein at The Hague

Conference of 1907. "The officers of the German Navy—I say it with emphasis—will always fulfil in the strictest manner duties which flow from the unwritten law of humanity and civilization."

The idea of the project was doubtless to create panic in England and to induce Sir John Jellicoe to move the Grand Fleet from the positions it had taken up, and which securely prevented the German squadrons from leaving the North Sea. Once in the Atlantic, the High Sea Fleet could play havoc with British shipping, and cause our 'first line of defence' to be seriously weakened by the necessity for rounding up the enemy ships. Then, and not till then, could a large invading army attempt to land on English soil with any likelihood of success. These hopes were completely frustrated. John Bull found that the raid gave an excellent fillip to recruiting; Sir John Jellicoe and his main force of floating fortresses budged not an inch.

Yet a certain section of the Grand Fleet was within an ace of bringing Rear-Admiral Funke to summary justice. Downright bad luck alone prevented it. The weather was hazy, and our Second Battle Cruiser Squadron was only eight miles away from the returning vessels when it ran into a bank of dense fog. Under cover of this the Germans escaped, to brag about their wonderful baby-killing exploit, and to spread the lie that they commanded the North Sea and Jellicoe was in hiding.

They did not get off scot-free, however, for the battle cruiser *Von der Tann* is believed to have collided with one of her consorts. On the occasion of the attempt on Great Yarmouth the *Yorck* struck a mine and foundered, taking with her the majority of her crew.

There is no doubt that on the 24th January a similar barbarous raid on the East Coast was contemplated. It was never realized, although an excellent start was made. The ships reached the neighbourhood of the Dogger Bank, but no German sailor saw the long white line of England's cliffs that day other than as a prisoner. The composition of the force was much the same as had been employed on the last occasion, minus the *Von der Tann*, which was still in the hands of the surgeons. There were three battle cruisers, the *Seydlitz*, the *Derfflinger*, and the *Moltke*, the armoured cruiser *Blücher*, half a dozen light cruisers which probably included the *Rostock*, the *Graudenz*, the *Stralsund*, and certainly the *Kolberg*, and a destroyer flotilla.

Rear-Admiral Hipper, the Commander of the German Battle Cruiser Squadron, flew his flag in the *Seydlitz*, a Hamburg-built ship of 24,640 tons, completed in 1913, armed with ten 11-in., twelve 5·9, and twelve 3·4 guns, and capable of attaining a speed approaching 29 knots. The *Derfflinger* was a larger ship, the latest of the type in the German Navy, having a displacement of 28,000 tons, a speed of 27

knots, and mounting eight 12-in., and a dozen 5·9 in., guns, and twelve 21-pr. quick-firers. The *Moltke*, the smallest of the battle cruisers and a sister ship of the *Goeben*, of Mediterranean fame, was of 22,640 tons, had a speed of 28·4 knots, was finished in 1911, and was fitted with a similar armament to that of the *Seydlitz*. The *Blücher*, which emanated from Kiel dockyard in April, 1908, and was commissioned in September, 1909, was of 15,500 tons displacement, capable of travelling at 25.3 knots, and had a miscellaneous assortment of guns, including twelve 8·2 in., eight 5·9 and sixteen 3·4. She represented a cost of £1,250,000. While the *Blücher* was beyond question the most powerful armoured cruiser in the world, she would never have been constructed had the secret agents of the German Government in this country been able to ascertain particulars of our first battle cruiser, the *Invincible*, which was laid down at the same time as the *Blücher*. The German Admiralty believed that the new British type of ship would have a displacement of 15,000 tons, and in order to go one better the *Blücher* was planned to have a displacement exceeding the approximate figure of the *Invincible*, which turned out to be 17,250 tons when she left Elswick. In addition the future flagship of Frederick Sturdee was an all-big-gun ship, a superb fighting machine with eight 12-in. guns that could be fired as a broadside on either beam, while the *Blücher* could only train the same number

of 8·2-in. guns, and sixteen 4-in. weapons for dealing with torpedo and underwater craft. The Germans were very angry, and no further vessels of the *Blücher* type were constructed. At the outbreak of war she had flown the flag of Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother, who took command of the German Fleet in the Baltic and achieved nothing of note.

The complements of the German big ships were as follow :—*Seydlitz*, 1108 men ; *Derfflinger*, 1000 men ; *Moltke*, 1013 men ; *Blücher*, 885 men ; their total displacement was 88,940 tons, and their weight of broadside 90,780 lb., or 22,560 lb. less than that of the five British battle cruisers, the *Lion*, the *Princess Royal*, the *New Zealand*, the *Indomitable*, and the *Tiger*, a brand-new ship which Sir David Beatty had at his disposal when he came up with the enemy. In addition he had four light cruisers, the *Southampton*, the *Nottingham*, the *Birmingham*, and the *Lowestoft*, and with the destroyer flotillas were the *Arethusa*, the *Aurora*, and the *Undaunted*.

The British ships were patrolling early in the morning, the destroyers and their attendant ships ahead, followed by the battle cruisers, with the light cruisers on their port beam, when the mosquito craft sighted the enemy speeding along in the direction of the English coast. The German giants looked no bigger than flies, so great was the distance

that separated them from the hunters. The men were not surprised to see them, for it was rumoured that the Germans were 'out,' and that Sir David Beatty had sworn to catch them. They had got into their fighting rig at 5.30, and breakfasted at 6 A.M., which indicated the possibility of a scrap. Something wanted 'wiping off a slate,' and that 'something' was bound up with the massacre of women and children at Scarborough and other places.

Suddenly the buglers on the big ships sounded 'Action stations,' and the Admiral signalled to the light cruisers and destroyer flotillas to "get in touch and report movements of the enemy." As Sir David Beatty afterward confessed, the latter order had already been forestalled. "Ten enemy ships, three battle cruisers, *Blücher*, and six light cruisers with destroyers to north-west" flashed back immediately from the *Southampton*, the *Arethusa* and the *Aurora*. Already the chase of the long-drawn-out line of enemy ships had begun. Immediately the Germans discovered that they were being chased their plan of murder and sudden death was abandoned. They turned tail, showing not the slightest willingness to enter into mortal combat with a mere section of the Fleet they had so valiantly driven off the sea—in the newspapers—and anxious only to cover the 120 miles that separated them from the 'wet triangle' of Heligoland. When they

first became visible to our look-out men, the ships were steering north-west ; already they had altered their course to south-east. At 7.25 miniature flashes of fire were seen, each flash looking for all the world like the flare of a vesta immediately it strikes the box. Then came a faint peal as of thunder. Five minutes later the men on the 'great grey wolves' saw the enemy in bulk fourteen miles off, 'steaming fast.'

The turbines of the *Lion* and her consorts, the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, the *New Zealand*, and the *Indomitable*, which were following in that order, buzzed like a swarm of mammoth bees as they gradually worked up to full speed. Not a shot was fired. The gunners were all attention but at peace. The men in the bowels of the ships fought this part of the battle, and fought it supremely well, with oil inlet and steam-gauge, switch-board and hydraulic pump. Smoke and flames from the funnels bore evidence of what was going on below in this great race for high stakes. For a time artificer, greaser, the whole black squad just became part of the machinery, with the Engineer Commander the only human element. No time to think of what *might* happen. 'Now' was the only division of time recognized. Every foot gained on the enemy was vital. The bullies must be brought to fight. "Sir David had sworn——" And that was the last word on the matter. "He is wonderful," says one of his

officers; "the idol of every man in the squadron." The squad got a testimonial later for all their sweat and nerve strain, the insufferable heat and the cooping up behind steel doors and below armoured gratings, and it was given to them by the man who at this moment was standing outside the conning tower, and not behind steel, his eyes fixed on the grey smudges on the horizon. "The excellent steaming of the ships engaged in the operation was a conspicuous feature. . . . Great credit is due to the Engineer Staffs of the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable*—these ships greatly exceeded their normal speed." That is how the democratic black folk figured in the most aristocratic journal in the world, *The London Gazette*, and above the signature of David Beatty, Vice-Admiral. The sensation of travelling through the water at over thirty miles an hour with the Heavy Cavalry of the Sea has nothing of the exhilarating effects of a high-speed motor car. "When we crack on speed," an officer frankly avowed, "the whole vessel, despite its strength and weight, vibrates so that you seem to be suffering from a chronic ague. It jars you to your very being." The aerials of the wireless caught every scrap of news that the commanding officers of the light cruisers thought likely to be of service to the Admiral. Nothing escaped them. They "maintained touch with the enemy" as hounds follow a fox in open country. Sir David rides a

horse well and is fond of hunting. He was now indulging his favourite sport at sea, but not quite so light-heartedly as on land.

In the turrets, magazine and shell rooms, the fire-control tops, the transmitting station and plotting-room and the conning towers, at the smaller guns and the torpedo tubes, officers and men were ready. Shells and cartridges came rumbling up the hydraulic lifts, spotting officers in the fire-control tops were sending particulars of range, speed, and the course of the enemy to the plotting-room and transmitting station, where busy brains were calculating ranges and deflections for the gun-layers.

When the hands of the Admiral's watch were within eight minutes of nine o'clock the battle cruisers were bounding along at 28½ knots. The genius of these giants is their greatness of speed and guns. They were then within 20,000 yards of the *Blücher*, the rear ship of the enemy's line, which was led by the light cruisers, with the destroyers disposed on their starboard beam. A single shot was fired by the *Lion* to test the range. It fell short, and splashed in the sea, sending up an imitation waterspout. Others left the great barrels, still falling short, but appreciably nearer as the squadrons maintained their parallel courses. At nine minutes after the hour the flagship scored her first hit on the heavy Krupp armour of the giant pre-Dreadnought. For the Germans " bragging time

was over and fighting time was come." Then the second unit of the "Cat Squadron," the *Tiger*, opened fire on the *Blücher*. "We didn't forget Scarborough and the women and children, whom they killed," says one of the crew, "and I think we fully avenged their loss. Our boys worked like anything, and true British pluck was once again shown." The *Lion* trained her guns on the next ship, the *Derfflinger*, No. 3 in the line, and saluted her with several salvos, which found their billet.

The range had now been considerably reduced —18,000 yards according to the mathematicians of the plotting-rooms. It wanted sixty seconds to 9.15 before the enemy responded. Their shells hit nothing but the sea, although they rained round the *Lion*, on which they concentrated for a time. The *Princess Royal* took up the challenge, and began pounding at the *Blücher*, followed by the *New Zealand*. Each battle cruiser as she came along made her a target, and put in such excellent practice that before the gift-ship of the Dominion was within range the sorely tried No. 4 of the enemy's line was already dropping astern. The *Princess Royal* was now making overtures to the *Derfflinger*, and there were very few misses. "I saw some of the shells drop clean on top of the Germans," said the captain of a trawler who was looking on.

The British flotilla cruisers and destroyers, smoking like petroleum wells on fire, had taken up a

position on the port quarter so as not to obscure the task of the range-finders. Suddenly a movement was noticed on the part of the enemy destroyers which denoted the imminence of an attack by them. At once the *Meteor* and M. Division shot ahead of the 'grey wolves' and frustrated the attempt.

At 9.45 the *Seydlitz* and the *Derfflinger* were in flames, the former receiving the undivided attentions of the *Lion* and the *Tiger*, and the latter of the *Princess Royal*, while the *Blücher*, now in a stricken condition, was subjected to a hail of missiles from the *New Zealand*. Shortly afterward the *Tiger*, finding it impossible to keep the range of her previous antagonist, the *Seydlitz*, transferred her fire to the *Blücher*. The reason for this was the voluminous clouds emitted by the funnels of the enemy's destroyers, which hoped to screen the big ships, and for a time succeeded.

" Under cover of this," says Sir David Beatty, the " enemy now appeared to have altered course to the northward to increase their distance, and certainly the rear ships hauled out on the port quarter of their leader, thereby increasing their distance from our line." The course of the British battle cruisers was therefore changed and speed increased so as to prevent them from escaping, if possible. Once more the destroyers attempted to attack, and were met by fire from the *Lion* and the *Tiger*, and forced to retire with undue haste. Following this the

stricken *Blücher* hauled out to port, and the *Indomitable*, the slowest and rearmost of the big ships, was signalled to deal with her. The others raced for the haven of safety behind their own mine-fields. They made no attempt to support their wounded comrade. They sacrificed her to save their own skins.

The German gunners fired well, but their accuracy was not supported by their ammunition, for many of the shells that struck the British ships failed to explode. The *Lion* and the *Tiger* were the only 'grey wolves' hit by them. "Shells," says an acting surgeon on the latter, "went over our ship with a noise like a lot of bees buzzing and dropped in hundreds about a hundred yards all round us, throwing up spray all over the ship." One of them struck the deck, was deflected by a steel beam, and crashed overboard. Another entered the armoured observation tower and killed a look-out. A third smashed against one of the turrets. Nine heroes of the fight lost their lives on the *Tiger*, including Engineer-Captain C. G. Taylor, once a Welsh Rugby International, who met his untimely death by a shell which wounded or killed all in the vicinity. In one of the control stations stood Midshipman A. G. T. Grier, four assistants, and a boy (1st class) named Francis G. H. Bamford. Suddenly there was a terrific report and a big flash. A shell had burst beneath the position, filling it with suffocating

fumes. When Bamford recovered consciousness he took off his smouldering clothes and then saw the middy lying across the trap door, his feet entangled in the remains of the iron ladder. After freeing Mr Grier, Bamford lay full length, let him down as far as he could, and had no option but to drop him some sixteen feet to a station below, which was in flames. The brave lad followed, dragged the unconscious officer out of the inferno, and—— There the story ends, for the next thing that Bamford remembers is finding himself lying on a table in one of the messes with bandages on his head and neck. "God help the next German ship to meet the *Tiger*," remarked a grim-faced sailor. "We have a few dead to avenge, and vain is the help of man."

The periscope glasses of a turret on the same ship were fogged by smuts and spray. Shells were screaming overhead, but it was absolutely necessary that the glasses should be wiped. A boy (1st class) volunteered to go into the zone of death and do what was necessary. He clambered up the mountain of a turret, cleaned the periscope—and stopped there until the action was over.

At 10.45 Sir David Beatty saw the wash made by the periscope of a German submarine only two points from his flagship, and other underwater craft were sighted in the vicinity. A rapid change of position frustrated any attempt at torpedoing, but a

few minutes later Dame Fortune was not so kind to the *Lion*. Just as the ship rose to meet a wave a shell hit the *Lion* in proximity to the feed tank of one of the boilers. This caused the port engine to stop, and flooded some of the forward compartments. After careful examination it was found that the injury could not be repaired at sea, and Sir David Beatty had no alternative but to transfer his flag. The *Lion* was compelled to fall out, the *Tiger* standing by for a time and bearing the brunt of the fight, while the *Meteor* was ordered to cover her. This placed the destroyer "directly in the centre of the two lines, the salvos from both squadrons continually passing over us," said an officer on the *Meteor* in a narrative which appeared in *The Liverpool Daily Post*. "We were absolutely in the line of fire," he continues, "shells whistling over and all around us, and now and again an enemy's broadside aimed directly at us. Try and imagine a frail destroyer, steaming thirty knots, with four battle cruisers on either side belching forth flame and smoke continually, the screech of the projectiles flying overhead seeming to tear the very air into ribbons, 12-in. shells dropping perilously near and raising columns of water 100 ft. into the air a few yards away, the spray washing our deck and drenching our hands.

"Picture the awful crashing noise, the explosions and flashes as shots took effect, the massive tongues

of fire shooting up, and the dense clouds of yellow and black smoke which obliterated a whole ship from view as the shells burst on striking, and this, if you can imagine it, will give you some idea of the *Meteor's* position in a glorious action. Its terrible, imposing grandeur made one forget personal danger. We had already been hit a couple of times, but without doing any material damage, and half of us missed death by inches; but it seemed that we possessed a charmed life."

Another shell struck the *Lion*, whereupon an Irish lad went to a cupboard to see if the missile were there, for all the world like dear old Mother Hubbard. The Admiral had not stayed a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. He signalled the *Attack* to come alongside, a difficult feat of seamanship splendidly performed by Lieutenant-Commander Cyril Callaghan, and was in such a hurry to rejoin the remainder of the squadron that he jumped straight down on to her deck, a no mean distance, and without anything soft to fall on. The temporary flagship sped away in the direction of the cruisers which were still engaged in the duel. It took three-quarters of an hour of fast steaming before Sir David Beatty was able to transfer his flag to the *Princess Royal*, Rear-Admiral Moore in the *New Zealand* having taken command in the interim.

Riddled and battered, the *Blücher* still had her flag flying. As the *Indomitable* kept up with her a look-out



The "Blücher" sinking
MONTAGUE DAWSON

saw a floating mine not far distant, which doubtless indicated that the Germans were now dropping their favourite weapons of maritime warfare overboard in the hope of blowing up the victors. Very soon the engines of the armoured cruiser came to a standstill, but the ensign was not hauled down. A lyddite shell from the British vessel crashed against the fore-turret. "It was pushed right over the side," asserts an eye-witness, "turret, guns, mountings, men—they all went, leaving a yawning gap in the *Blücher's* deck."

The *Blücher's* death-blow was dealt by the *Arethusa*, although some of the newspapers stated that the *Meteor* fired the tin fish which finished off the great armoured cruiser by tearing a ghastly rent in her side. The *Arethusa* fired two torpedoes at 1500 yards, which is considered a very near range at a ship practically at rest. It is true that the *Meteor* fired a torpedo, but at 5000 yards, and it is very doubtful if it reached her, as it was probably set for high speed, which limits the range to under that figure. The survivors of the *Blücher* voluntarily stated that both the *Arethusa's* torpedoes hit, although those on board the light cruiser were only sure of one. The dying leviathan returned the compliment, but neither of them touched Commodore Tyrwhitt's vessel.[1]

The German sailors were lined up awaiting the end, some of the officers shaking hands and bidding

[1] In February, 1916, the *Arethusa* was struck by a mine off the east coast. Fortunately nearly all the members of her crew were saved.

each other farewell. "Jump!" shouted the crew of the *Arethusa* as she came along. Some of them did so, and many were saved. While the rescue work was going on a Zeppelin was sighted, and an aeroplane attempted to bomb the boats, thereby doing their country and the cause of humanity a grave disservice. It has been suggested by eye-witnesses that this was done in error, the aircraft believing that it was a British ship that was sinking. Even if this were really the case it did not justify the attack. Most of the German sailors were as black as niggers, and wore lifebelts. "It was a terrible time," one of the rescued officers remarked in excellent English. "We cannot do anything against you at sea," said a candid sailor. "On land, yes; but at sea, no. You are too good for us." "Thank God, I am out of that hell of fire," was the fervent thanksgiving of the Engineer-Commander as he was hauled from the water. The prisoners were subsequently placed in a concentration camp.

Captain Erdmann, of the *Blücher*, who died at Edinburgh in February, 1915, was buried with full military honours. Two British naval officers immediately followed the gun-carriage. Captain Erdmann was laid by the side of one of his Lieutenants and one of his crew in Echobank Cemetery.

Through the "unfortunate chance shot" which hit the *Lion*, "we were undoubtedly deprived of a greater victory," Sir David Beatty wired in his

preliminary telegraphic report. "The presence of the enemy's submarines subsequently necessitated the action being broken off." A little later the starboard engine of the flagship gave trouble owing to priming, and she was taken in tow by the *Indomitable*. The Germans had been chased for over 100 miles, and during the greater part of the time were fighting a running action. The *Moltke* received the least damage of the armoured cruisers, but at one time the *Princess Royal* "sent her a few presents," to use the expressive phraseology of a leading seaman.

Although the battle off the Dogger Bank was mainly an affair of big ships, the destroyers played their part with distinction and set on fire several of the enemy mosquito craft. An 8-in. shell, probably fired by the *Blücher*, crashed into the engine-room of the *Meteor* and killed four men. She was taken in tow by the *Liberty*. The light cruiser *Aurora* engaged the *Kolberg*, tore away her middle funnel, raked her fore and aft, and left her in a crippled condition.

The *Frankfort Gazette*, in an endeavour to cover up the defeat, referred to the fight as "hardly more than a skirmish," but the *Frankfurter* went one better by boldly declaring that the British had lost one of its capital ships and suggesting "many other ships" were "seriously injured." The myth regarding the sinking of the *Tiger* and two destroyers was spread throughout the world by the German wireless, and it took a long time for the British Admiralty

to prove that a week or two would suffice to repair the minor injuries received by the *Tiger*. The casualties sustained by us were exceedingly few. They totalled one officer and thirteen men killed, and three officers and twenty-six men wounded. The *Blücher* was at the bottom of the sea, the *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz* were seriously damaged. According to one account, the German flagship was struck by a shell under a turret which exploded some of the ammunition, while the loss of life on board was heavy. The disaster was visited on the head of Admiral von Ingenohl, whose command of the High Sea Fleet was given to Admiral von Pöhl.

When Mr Winston Churchill referred to the action in the House of Commons a few weeks later he ventured to suggest that when the Germans "accepted without doubt or hesitation their inferiority" and sought refuge in flight they were wise, "and that if they had taken any other view they would unquestionably have been destroyed." As a trial of the relative qualities of the lines of battle he regarded the contest "as an important, and I think I may say satisfactory, event." Moreover, it was of value because of the light it threw upon "rival systems of design and armament and upon relative gunnery efficiency. It is the first test we have ever had, and without depending too much upon it I think it is at once important and encouraging. First of all it vindicates, so far as it goes, the theories of

design, and particularly of big-gun armament, always identified with Lord Fisher. The range of the British guns was found to exceed that of the German. Although the German shell is a most formidable instrument of destruction, the bursting-smashing power of the heavier British projectile is decidedly greater, and—this is the great thing—our shooting is at least as good as theirs. The Navy, while always working very hard—no one except themselves knows how hard they have worked in these years—have credited the Germans with a sort of super-efficiency in gunnery, and we have always been prepared for some surprises in their system of control and accuracy of fire. But there is a feeling after the combat of the 24th January that perhaps our naval officers were too diffident in regard to their own professional skill in gunnery."

During the course of his speech the First Lord of the Admiralty gave some other interesting particulars of the Navy. "We have lost," he said, "mainly by submarines, the lives of 5500 officers and men, and we have killed, mainly by gun-fire, an equal number, which is, of course, a much larger proportion of the German forces engaged. We have also taken in sea-fighting 82 officers and 934 men prisoners of war. No British naval prisoners of war have been taken in fighting at sea by the Germans. When they had the inclination they had not the opportunity, and when they had the opportunity they had not the

inclination. For the loss of these British lives we have lived through six months of this war safely and even prosperously. We have established for the time being a command of the sea such as we had never expected, such as we have never known, and such as our ancestors have never known at any other period of our history."

The *Lion* and the *Tiger* got mauled a little near the home of the herrings, but their antagonists fared considerably worse. There are still a few dents in their armour, and a bit of patching here and there is evident. They are honourable scars. The *Indomitable* treasures a silver statue of a guardian angel with a lion on each side, and bearing the inscription : " Presented to the Captain and Officers of H.M.S. *Indomitable* to commemorate an excellent 6½-in. hawser."

These sea-dogs, descendants of ancient mariners who long since snatched the trident from Neptune and presented it to Britannia, dearly like their little joke. The sceptre is in safe keeping while men of the Beatty breed guard the waste of waters day in and day out, in fair weather and foul, despite mailed fists, submarines, mine-fields, Zeppelins and High Sea Squadrons. When distributing the medals Sir David recited these lines :

There's beauty in the howling of a gale,
There's a beauty in the bellow of the blast;
There's a terrible outpouring
When the Lion *starts a-roaring,*
And the Tiger *starts a-lashing of its tail.*

CHAPTER XIII

ANTWERP'S FORLORN HOPE

THE German Army was engaged in a task dear to its evil heart. It was hacking a way through Belgium, a little country not lacking in greatness. Liège had fallen after offering a superb resistance ; Brussels, abandoned by the Belgians for strategical reasons, was in the hands of the invaders ; the forts of Namur, lauded as impregnable, had been shattered by howitzers. There remained Antwerp, the city of sieges, the "final keep of the kingdom," which the great Napoleon coveted as a "pistol presented at the head of England." Thence had been sent the treasure of the capital, which signified much. It was at once the seat of Government and the court of last resort of the Belgian Army.

With the optimism characteristic of a gallant race, the civil population pinned their faith to the double ring of defences which guarded the Liverpool of the Scheldt. They told themselves that no howitzer was powerful enough to smash these stout fortifications of solid concrete and tempered steel. With their armoured gun positions they were unconquerable. Centuries ago Antwerp

had suffered cruelties at the hands of Spaniards, and some of its oldest inhabitants had dim recollections of bombardments by Dutch and French, but the third decade of the nineteenth century was neither to-day nor yesterday. The Place Verte would never resound to the tramp of an alien army. All unrealized, its advance guard had paraded through the city long before the mightiest fighting machine of all Europe had crossed the frontier and exchanged the first shots of the Great War. It was parading them now—the German merchants who had settled in the city, taken its money, and were to sell the place by treacherous signalling, illicit communication, and flag-waving. If Antwerp's loyalty was to be appraised by the display of national colours it ranked very high. The real patriots afterward discovered that their German neighbours had aided and abetted in this display, for reasons known only to themselves then, but obvious enough now. Judas is still rampant.

The guns in the fortresses had been made by the house of Krupp, which was consolation to non-combatants. Krupp should fight Krupp from cupolas of hardened steel. Siege artillery has to be brought up and used more or less in the open. What the inhabitants of Antwerp did not know was that their cannon was outranged by two miles. Moreover, permanent strongholds cannot change their positions. Once known, they are always

known. The artillery of the Germans was ponderous but mobile. Army officers on both sides understood these things. It is perhaps just as well that the non-combatants within the city did not. In addition to the worthless forts to which the people pinned such great faith was the firm belief that the British Army was coming to their relief, and the British Army was unconquerable.

Monday, the 28th of September 1914, marked the commencement of the bombardment of the outer defences of Antwerp. In three days most of them had been shattered. The true state of affairs was not realized by the good folk of the city until Saturday, when the Burgomaster issued a proclamation allowing those who wished to leave to do so, and advising them to proceed in the direction of the north and of the north-west. Many took the hint. For some the Pilgrimage of the Homeless began; for others it was merely a continuation of the Great Trek from town to town and city to city. Not all the martyrs died in the Dark Ages.

Subjected to the heavy fire, the embankment of the great reservoir burst, cutting off the water supply of the city, flooding some of the infantry trenches, and making the task of bringing up rations and ammunition at certain points exceedingly difficult. Mud, which in other places had proved a friend, and been deliberately wooed by opening the dykes, became a stern and relentless foe. Antwerp had to

fall back on its artesian wells, inadequate to the ordinary needs of so extensive a place, and quite useless for the purpose of coping with serious outbreaks of fire. That there would be fights with the flames when the great guns began to pound was sufficiently obvious. The prospect was not pleasing, but besieged cities must put up with minor disasters. After all, a score or two of houses might be reduced to ashes as sacrifice to the Huns without doing further harm. Conflagrations do not always spread. At present the possibility was a menace, nothing more. Little devil Doubt surrendered to the more insistent claims of Hope, and Hope whispered : "The forts ! The British !"

On the previous day, Friday, the 2nd of October, arrangements had been made for the Government and the Legations to shift their quarters to Ostend, on the coast. Officially, the prospect of saving the city was regarded with despair. Then came a sudden and dramatic change of plan. On Saturday it was decided to hold Antwerp at all costs, although the foreign colonies sailed. Sir Cecil Hertslet and M. Crozier, the British and French Consuls-General, remained. Word had been received that England was sending reinforcements.

A few hours before, when Big Ben was striking midnight and the majority of London's citizens had forgotten the war in sleep, Lord Kitchener, Mr Winston Churchill, Prince Louis of Battenberg,

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Sir Edward Grey and one or two other members of the Government met at the London residence of the Secretary of State for War. The matter under consideration was urgent and serious. Statesmen, being human beings, need rest. The cause of their wakefulness at this unseemly hour lay on the table. It was a telegram received from the Belgian Government the previous afternoon, announcing that it had been decided to evacuate Antwerp with the Field Army and to withdraw from the line of forts. This was a bolt from the blue, for plans which Lord Kitchener and the French Government were making for sending an Army to the relief of the stricken city were far advanced. "It seemed that at the moment when aid was available everything was going to be thrown away for the sake of three or four days' continued resistance," Mr Winston Churchill afterward avowed in the House of Commons. The then First Lord of the Admiralty, who is nothing if not a lover of high adventure, suggested that he should cross to Antwerp without delay "to tell the Belgian Government what was being done, to ascertain the situation on the spot, and to see in what way the defence could be prolonged until either a relieving force could arrive or until the impossibility of sending a relieving force could be established." Apparently the statesman courier had to exercise the proverbial wisdom of the serpent, for he tells us that he "had to be extremely careful not to say anything on behalf of the British

Government which would encourage the Belgians to resistance in the hope of getting help which we could not afterward make good."

Mr Churchill duly arrived. "At one o'clock," says Mr Alexander Powell, who witnessed the incident, "a big drab-coloured touring car filled with British naval officers tore up the Place de Meir, its horn sounding a hoarse warning, took the turn into the narrow Marché aux Souliers on two wheels, and drew up in front of the hotel. Before the car had fairly come to a stop, the door of the tonneau was thrown violently open, and out jumped a smooth-faced, sandy-haired, stoop-shouldered, youthful-looking man in the undress Trinity House uniform. There was no mistaking who it was. It was the Right Hon. Winston Churchill. As he darted into the crowded lobby, which, as usual at the luncheon hour, was filled with Belgian, French, and British staff officers, diplomatists, Cabinet Ministers, and correspondents, he flung his hands out in a nervous, characteristic gesture, as though pushing his way through a crowd.

"It was a most spectacular entrance, and reminded me for all the world of a scene in a melodrama where the hero dashes up, bare-headed, on a foam-flecked horse, and saves the heroine, or the old homestead, or the family fortune, as the case may be. . . . 'I think everything will be all right now, Mr Burgomaster,' he called down in a voice which could

be distinctly heard throughout the lobby. 'You needn't worry. We're going to save the city.'"[1]

As a result of the conference it was agreed that the Western Allies should inform King Albert within three days whether or not it would be possible to dispatch a relieving force, and if in the affirmative to give particulars. Mr Churchill made two definite offers, however. They were that, should the proposed expedition be found impracticable, sufficient British troops would be sent to various points to ensure the retirement of the Belgian Field Army, while in the interim naval guns and naval brigades were to assist in the defence of Antwerp.

In the previous August, following a raid by the dreaded Uhlans, a strong force of British Marines attached to the new Royal Naval Division had been sent to Ostend and occupied the town and surrounding country. The landing of the 'Jollies' almost coincided with the 250th anniversary of the employment of "Land Souldjers" for service in "his Mats. Fleets" instituted by Charles II. "There never was an appeal made to them for honour, courage, or loyalty," Lord St Vincent once declared, "that they did not more than realize my highest expectation. If ever real danger should come to England the Marines will be found the country's sheet anchor." The upholders of this splendid tradition had received a most enthusiastic reception at Belgium's popular seaside

[1] *Fighting in Flanders*, by E. Alexander Powell (London, 1914), p. 176.

resort, but their stay was brief. In those terrible days of October Ostend saw more sailors dressed in khaki.

They were the 8000 men of the Royal Naval Division promised by Mr Churchill, units belonging to the Marines and the various Reserves of the Fleet which the Navy was able to spare after mobilization. The First Royal Naval Brigade consisted of the Drake, Benbow, Hawke and Collingwood battalions; the Second Brigade of the Nelson, Howe, Hood, and Anson battalions. The battalions of the Royal Marine Brigade bore no such honoured names; they were merely numbered from nine to twelve. The commanding officer was Major-General A. Paris, C.B. The Honorary Colonels of the several Brigades were respectively Lord Fisher, Sir Arthur K. Wilson, and Lord Charles Beresford. "Tell them to look forward to splendid duty both by sea and land," Lord Fisher had wired. "Our island history is full of glorious deeds of sailors' brigades in every war. Let us beat the record! A fight to a finish!" With these men—many of them indeed had not reached man's estate—were a few trained professional officers and a sprinkling of bluejackets. Although they had not been together for more than a couple of months, and some had only recently joined, while part of the equipment showed the haste with which they had left Deal and embarked on the transports at Dover, they did their best to bridge the terrible gap caused by what Mr Churchill

calls "the great emergency." France sent a division of *Fusiliers Marins*.

The special correspondent of *The Times* remarks that when the British passed through Antwerp it was the first time he had heard the Belgian soldiers singing as they marched. "I sincerely believe," he adds, "that it is no exaggeration to say that every Belgian soldier in the trenches to-day is worth three of what he was yesterday. They fought before; oh yes, they fought with a dogged, careless gallantry which compelled me to admire. But to-day they are new men, full of fire and laughter and confidence."

The Royal Marine Brigade, numbering 2200 of all ranks, was the first in Antwerp. They were marched to the trenches during the night of the 3rd–4th October, and early on the morning of Sunday occupied a position facing Lierre, on the southern front, with the 7th Belgian Regiment as their comrades in arms. The larger part of the village, on the opposite side of the river, was already held by the enemy. Some of the men were also sent to the advanced post on the Nèthe to relieve troops who were exhausted by their long and stubborn resistance to the invaders. The outer forts had already fallen. The importance of Lierre lay in the fact that it was situated near the easiest route for the Austrian siege guns to reach the temporary capital. Why the Germans did not use their own heavy artillery remains a mystery.

Mr Churchill was in the battle line. His last experience of warfare had been in South Africa, but that was mere child's play to the scenes which confronted him here. Eye-witnesses have testified to his amazing coolness. He pulled steadily at a large cigar. "It must be confessed," says Signor Calzabodolo, the well-known Italian journalist, who saw the First Lord, "that it is not easy to find in all Europe a Minister who would be capable of smoking peacefully under that shell-fire. He smiled and looked quite satisfied."

The Marines held out on the 5th until the afternoon, when the position was assailed so fiercely that it would have meant nothing less than annihilation had they remained. The advanced posts were driven in and the Germans crossed the river and reached the bank that was being defended, forcing some of the Belgians to retire and exposing the British right flank. The Marines, many of whom were already weak for want of food and sleep, and had borne the brunt of the attack, were therefore ordered to a new line about half a mile from the river. Here the guns of the enemy continued to search the trenches with heavy and continuous fire, thanks to observation balloons, one of which was brought down. Aeroplanes also hovered over the line, dropping smoke bombs to give the Germans the exact positions. Notwithstanding this Colonel Tierchon, of the 2nd Chasseurs, assisted by British

aircraft, regained the lost trenches late in the afternoon. At 4 A.M. on the following day, the 6th, the Belgians attempted to hurl the enemy across the river. This movement against the Germans, who were in force and supported by their more powerful artillery, completely failed. Practically all the Belgian trenches had to be evacuated. Another counter-attack was attempted, but the troops available were too few, and it likewise failed. "The bombardment," reports General Paris, "was very violent, but the retirement of the Brigade was well carried out, and soon after midday an intermediate position, which had been hastily prepared, was occupied."

Early on the 6th there arrived at Antwerp the lads of the Naval Brigade, with half a dozen naval guns, armed motor cars, and a convoy of motor buses, apparently destined for the Marble Arch, Kilburn, the Bank and other familiar London centres, laden with supplies and ammunition. Antwerp prefers its comprehensive system of smooth-running electric trams to jolting motor buses, but they were welcomed warmly enough on that October morning. The populace saw in them the beginning of a new phase in the defence of the city; to the sailor boys who marched along they were part and parcel of the Homeland. In London a motor bus was a useful nuisance; in Antwerp it became a dear familiar friend. Everybody believed that the R.N.D.

was merely the first instalment of the reinforcements that Britain was on the verge of pouring into Antwerp. In this matter everybody was wrong.

During the afternoon the hard-pressed Marines were relieved by the new-comers. The abandonment of the line of the Nèthe was now carried out. With the aid of two or three maxim guns the Naval Brigades held their position until the Belgian Army had been withdrawn. They did not leave Lierre until 1 A.M. on Wednesday, the 7th, when the retirement was successfully carried out.

The main defence of Antwerp now devolved on the inner chain of moated forts, where the majority of the Belgians were now stationed. The Naval Division for the most part occupied the intervals between the forts, assisted by the armoured train which had been hastily constructed under the supervision of Lieutenant-Commander Littlejohn. The train, made up of coal trucks, goods vans, and a locomotive, all heavily protected, was manned by British and Belgian gunners and infantry. Accounts vary as to the number of 4·7 naval guns which were mounted, but there were either two or four.

Much had been done by way of preparation for this last stand—portions of the surrounding country submerged by opening the dykes, miles of barbed entanglements erected to delay the progress of the German infantry, villages levelled to the ground so as not to interfere with the fire of the forts, and

beautiful avenues of trees cut down for the same stern reason. The men told themselves and each other that all was not yet lost, though things were most assuredly bordering on the desperate. Those good folk who had placed their faith in the trinity of defence—the Antwerp forts, the Belgian Army, the Royal Naval Division—at last forsook hope and fled the doomed city.

Some miles out a few trains ambled along in the direction of Ostend, where a stretch of blue water alone separated them from England, the home of exiles from time immemorial. The shades of the Huguenots and of the French refugees at the time of the Revolution bade them welcome. Passengers jammed themselves in the long coaches, clambered on the roofs, clung to the couplings, found accommodation on the tender of the locomotive. Belgian Boy Scouts did not content themselves with one good deed that day; they did them in constant succession. Thousands, less fortunate than the passengers of the trains, tramped along in a seemingly endless procession. Women hugged babies whose brother or sister dragged at the back, furtively clutching their mother's skirts, the older children trudging with stoical fortitude and bearing a basket of food or a few household treasures; old folk were helped by the middle-aged of both sexes. Wealth and poverty went hand in hand. Luxurious motor cars, hand carts with the faithful dog beneath, farm

wagons, wheelbarrows—everything that could be pushed or pulled was pressed into service. It was the exodus of a nation which had no opportunity to borrow from its neighbours, and without a Promised Land other than its own desolate country at such a season and at such a time as the invaders might be hurled back, God alone knew when. Many, taking the line of least resistance, crossed into Holland; others, fearing that the Dutch would be forced to exchange neutrality for hostility, the ploughshare for the sword, crowded on the steamers, colliers, and fishing smacks in Ostend harbour. Some arrived at no earthly destination. Their warfare was done. You could have tracked this great army of despair by the shimmering dust-cloud that enveloped it.

On Wednesday, the 7th, the evacuation of Antwerp was still going on. General Deguise, the Military Governor, had received notification of its intended bombardment if it was not surrendered. He had refused. The newspapers made their last appearance; the shops were shuttered, the public offices closed, the great oil tanks of petroleum set on fire, and over fifty ships in the docks and the Scheldt sunk or rendered useless. The enemy did not have it entirely his own way. Evidence of his intense annoyance is furnished by a Reichstag deputy who visited Belgium. Writing to a German paper, he says: "The great harbour of Antwerp presented

a picture of desolation, and often of senseless destruction. In front of many of the sluice gates lighters, mostly loaded with grain, had been sunk; while across the harbour entrance lay the scuttled Lloyd steamer *Gneisenau*. In thirty-two other German steamers the engines had been completely wrecked by dynamite cartridges. I inspected the Lloyd steamer *Santa Fé*, where everything had been smashed and broken in the most stupid manner. One can say that in most cases only the hulls of the ships remained intact. On the quays I saw several thousand motor cars, half of which had no framework, while others lacked tyres, and in every case the cylinders had been destroyed. A great number of large surf-boats, intended for the Congo, had all been rendered useless by having holes smashed in them. One big shed had been burned, and the heat had caused the cargo cranes to collapse."

Most significant fact of all, many of the troops were withdrawn westward under cover of the forts and advanced trenches, the latter manned by Belgians and British resolved to sell their lives dearly. Among them was Sub-Lieutenant Arthur Asquith, a son of the Prime Minister, who had several narrow shaves and made himself immensely popular with all. "He roughs it with the boys," asserted one of the men, "who think the world of him. He takes his food with them, and has the same as they have. The last time I saw him he was drinking his tea

from a corned-beef can." Those who were thus left to ensure the safety of their brethren played their rôle with splendour. At midnight the bombardment began. The civil population, amounting to half a million people, had scattered and disappeared, travelling beneath the great black cloud made by the flaming oil. The British lines were now situated in the vicinity of Forts 1 to 7. On the 8th Fort 4, the nearest to the enemy's lines and the key of the defence, was entirely garrisoned by the Drake Battalion of the First Brigade. It was starved of guns. Two unmounted Krupp veterans whose range was approximately 1100 yards, and two others supposed to be capable of firing 660 yards, all using black powder, constituted its chief 'armament'—the term is a libel on the word. One of the smaller weapons had its muzzle blown off by the first shot that was fired from it; the other promptly jammed before it had been brought into service.

"That afternoon and evening," says one of the band of heroes who held the fort, to quote *The Daily Telegraph*, "we were exposed to a tremendous fire of shrapnel and high explosive shell from the besieging Germans. We replied vigorously, and repelled several German attacks which followed a temporary lull in the bombardment, inflicting heavy losses on the closely packed, oncoming Germans. These attacks failing, the



Germans shelling Antwerp
H. W. Koekkoek

German artillerymen recommenced to shell us more fiercely than ever. The fire was almost incessant and deafening in its intensity. We could hear the masonry falling away with almost every shot, and what made it all the more terrifying, the shells appeared to be coming from all sides of us, as well as the German front. . . . About three o'clock in the morning the English officer in command of the fort took advantage of a brief respite in the rain of fire to send out a patrol to find out what was the position of affairs. The men who came back reported that we were entirely isolated, both the Belgian and British forces having retired from the line originally taken up between the forts. In the circumstances our commander ordered an immediate retreat. I need hardly say we were glad to quit the place. In trying to effect our escape under a renewed fire fully half our fellows were lost. I don't know how many were killed, but some of them lost their lives falling in getting out of the fort." About 200 of the men got safely to the west bank of the Scheldt and crossed the Dutch frontier, probably quite unaware that, as Holland was a neutral country, they would be interned for the duration of the war. According to another report, the order to retire reached the fort. It is certain that it was given to the Hawke, Collingwood and Benbow Battalions. They grimly held their position till the last possible moment.

"We seem to be in a pickle," a petty officer writes in his diary, which afterward appeared in *The Times*. "Our baggage party have just got here. Report the town in flames and all our gear lost. Shells coming in like one o'clock. Man on my side got a bit in his leg, but says he can shoot just as well with one leg. Belgian artilleryman reports that he and two others are all that are left of our covering fort. We seem to have nothing to do but wait for the end. These trenches would be all right against savages, but against their huge artillery, like so much dust. These shells come in with a whiz like an express train and then—crash! The spirits of our troops are top-hole. No one the slightest bit excited. Just smoking or yarning and dodging shells; but it's just rotten not coming alongside them. Here she comes—dip, crash! Saved again. Another non-stop for Antwerp. When they shorten the range for us—well, cheer-oh! Officer just given us the bird for laughing."

"During the day (October 8)," General Paris tells us in his official dispatch, "it appeared evident that the Belgian Army could not hold the forts any longer. About 5.30 P.M. I considered that if the Naval Division was to avoid disaster an immediate retirement under cover of darkness was necessary. General de Guise, the Belgian Commander, was in complete agreement. He was most chivalrous and gallant, insisting on giving orders that the roads

and bridges were to be cleared for the passage of the British troops. The retirement began about 7.30 P.M., and was carried out under very difficult conditions. The enemy were reported in force (a Division plus a Reserve Brigade) [1] on our immediate line of retreat, rendering necessary a detour of fifteen miles to the north. All the roads were crowded with Belgian troops, refugees, herds of cattle, and all kinds of vehicles, making intercommunication a practical impossibility. Partly for those reasons, partly on account of fatigue, and partly from at present unexplained causes large numbers of the 1st Naval Brigade became detached, and I regret to say are either prisoners or interned in Holland."

Grim and gruesome are some of the stories told by the men who were Antwerp's forlorn hope. Behind the trenches used by the men of the 2nd Naval Brigade a woman was noticed in the garb of a Red Cross nurse. She was standing close to a windmill, and was using it to signal to the enemy. When the fire went short she pushed the sails away from her, moving them in the opposite direction when the shells fell in the rear. This was eventually noticed, and the woman promptly arrested and found to be a German spy. A guide who professed to be

[1] A German Division consists of 17,000 men, 4000 horses, 600 vehicles, or twelve battalions of 1080 men each, four squadrons of 180 men each, and twelve batteries of six guns or howitzers each. A Brigade has 6480 men.

showing some of the men the line of retreat to Ostend was proved to be leading them in the direction of the enemy and was shot dead. Elsewhere a German was found signalling with a lantern hidden inside his overcoat. About twenty-four buses and lorries were abandoned, while a private in the Motor Transport Section of the Army Service Corps confessed that during the six days he was at Antwerp he slept about two hours each night on his lorry seat and did not wash once. A seaman described "our little scrap" at Antwerp as "a little too hot. We were in the trenches three days under shrapnel fire the whole time. Our last day we were told we were to hold out until relief came, and we knew we jolly well couldn't." Some of them remained in the advanced trenches until Friday, when each man was obliged to carry 200 rounds of ammunition so that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. At one time some of them were between two fires, the Belgian and the enemy, owing to some misunderstanding. When they telephoned to the Belgian trenches it was found that the man at the other end of the wire was unable to understand English, and it took a considerable time for the soldiers of the black, yellow and red to discover that they were actually firing at their friends instead of their foes. A chaplain who had seen fighting in the Sudan against Dervishes said the experience was trifling compared with the appalling days at

Antwerp. A Marine was treated for no fewer than twenty-three wounds. In the retirement some of the men had no guide to direct them other than the livid glare of fires in the city, and only just managed to cross the Scheldt on a pontoon bridge a minute or two before it was destroyed. One battalion of the 1st Brigade, the 2nd Brigade, and all the Marines excepting one battalion entrained at St. Gillies Waes after marching all night, and reached England.

Some of the gallant fellows of the Royal Marine Brigade, which formed the rear-guard of the whole force, had a perilous night adventure on a refugee train bound for Ostend. It was made up of scores of open trucks crowded with all sorts and conditions of terror-stricken humanity. About an hour after they had left Antwerp the train pulled up at Morbeke and was attacked on both sides by Germans, who were assisted by an aeroplane which threw a search-light on the long, straggling target. Two officers clambered out of the truck they were in, and stealthily made their way to the engine, fortunately dodging the fire of a machine gun that was being used by the attacking party. The driver was nowhere to be seen. He had probably taken to his heels. The stoker was in a condition of collapse, from which it seemed impossible to arouse him. A German who had seen the officers clamber up the steps to the footplate sought to follow them, and

was dispatched by a revolver shot in the nick of time. It was then discovered that the train had been switched into a siding. There seemed nothing for the officers to do but to bring down as many of the enemy as they could before they were either killed in the cab of the locomotive or taken prisoners. Suddenly the sound of hurrying feet reached their ears, and a welcome voice shouted that the commanding officer had bluntly informed the Germans that "Royal Marines never surrender" and they had cut a way through. The would-be drivers jumped from the engine and joined their colleagues in double quick time. After marching for eight weary hours the Marines reached Selzaate, and again entrained. Another little band was attacked by the much-vaunted Uhlans as they drove along in a cart with some Belgian soldiers. They cut holes in the tarpaulin cover and let fly with their rifles until the pursuit was given up.

The Hawke, Collingwood, and Benbow Battalions arrived at Lokeren, which they found to be occupied by the Germans, whose threat to cut off the retreat of the Antwerp garrison had been partly responsible for the evacuation of the city. They managed to get clear, however, but not without some determined rear-guard fighting, and crossed into Holland. No fewer than 967 members of the Royal Naval Division were reported as 'missing,' including those taken prisoners of war, while 1560 were interned,

37 killed, and 193 wounded. One Marine walked over fifty miles before he managed to board a ship bound for England.

To those of the two Naval Brigades who returned Mr Churchill sent a message congratulating the officers and men of all ranks and ratings on having "acquitted themselves admirably" and "thoroughly justified the confidence reposed in them," while the Marines "sustained fully by their firmness, discipline, and courage the traditions of the corps." He added that "The Naval Division was sent to Antwerp not as an isolated incident, but as part of a large operation for the relief of the city. Other and more powerful considerations prevented this from being carried out. . . . It is too early now to judge what effect the delaying, even for five or six days, of at least 60,000 Germans before Antwerp may have had upon the fortunes of the general battle to the southward. It was certainly powerful and helpful." Sir John French wrote that the valuable assistance which the Belgian Army gave at the operations on the canal and the Yser river "must be regarded as an outcome of the intervention of General Paris's force."

The expedition has been the subject of much adverse criticism, but this is not the place to weigh up the available evidence, which in any case is far too scanty for the purpose of arriving at a just verdict. It has been pointed out that on the 29th

September the Belgian General Staff and the Belgian Government decided to withdraw the Field Army with the idea of taking up a defensive position on the Dender and effecting a junction with the French. The retreat was to begin on the 2nd of October, the garrison alone remaining until it had been carried out. Far from the handful of Britons extricating the Belgian Army, their presence merely retarded a withdrawal which would probably have been carried out under less adverse conditions had no proposals of reinforcements been made. As a consequence of the delay the garrison troops in the western part of the city were unable to rejoin the main Army, and it is believed that 30,000 of them were killed, taken prisoners, or compelled to enter Dutch territory to escape envelopment by the Germans. To cover and protect the retreat of the Belgian Army the 3rd Cavalry Division and the 7th Division under Sir Henry Rawlinson had to be diverted at the time of the battle of Ypres-Armentières, when Sir John French could ill afford to spare them. Having accomplished this task, Rawlinson was ordered to seize Menin, but owing to the weakened condition of his troops he was obliged to fall back to prevent disaster. "The result was," to quote the Field-Marshal's dispatch, "that the enemy's continued possession of the passage at Menin certainly facilitated his rapid reinforcement of his troops and thus rendered any further advance

impracticable." Sir John French personally investigated the condition of the 7th Division. "Owing to constant marching and fighting, ever since its hasty embarkation, in aid of the Antwerp Garrison," he says, "this division had suffered great losses, and was becoming very weak. I therefore decided temporarily to break up the Fourth Corps. . . ." Again, it is difficult to reconcile the statement of the Secretary of the Admiralty issued on the 11th of October 1914 with the statement made by Mr Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on the 15th of November 1915. The former said that "in response to an appeal by the Belgian Government" the Royal Naval Division was sent to Antwerp; the latter stated that he made the proposal already mentioned on a previous page, and that it was "accepted by both Governments." Certainly the Tragedy of the Highway would have lost much of its grim irony had Antwerp been evacuated earlier.

It is a sordid story of a plan that went wrong, as plans are apt to do in warfare, redeemed to some extent by the bravery of the Belgian Army, the amazing fortitude of the Belgian people, and the zeal of a few thousand British men and youths who played the part of a forlorn hope with extraordinary doggedness under the most unfavourable conditions.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WAR OF THE UNDERSEAS

SUBMARINES partake of the nature of mines in that they are underhanded in their dealings. It was some time before Jack Tar reconciled himself to these very real and practical sea-serpents, with the inevitable result that now there are always more men clamouring for posts in them than vacancies to be filled. It is his way to hate new-fangled ideas and then to love them. The natural conservatism of the sailor revolted at the idea of steamships and ironclads, but he would no more return to windjammers nowadays than he would enter the German Navy had he the opportunity and all the allurement of double pay. His chief complaint is that the enemy does not give "our lovely boats" sufficient opportunity of showing their prowess. "'Avin' drove off everythink German that was floatable on the 'Igh Seas we're slack, whereas von Turniptops 'as ordered 'is dip chicks to pot at pretty well everythin' in sight." Thus a certain British A.B. summed up the situation as the strictly official attitude of himself and his comrades of the lower deck.

Not long before the outbreak of the Great War

it so happened that the submarine loomed large in the public eye by reason of a controversy started by Admiral Sir Percy Scott, who held that the undersea craft was destined to be the capital ship of the future. Previous to this submarines had scarcely been mentioned in the newspapers except in connexion with disaster. People pitied their crews, amazed that civilized men could be induced to put their heads in what were regarded as hermetically sealed coffins. The silent senior service maintained its traditional reserve, honouring dead men when they were brought up by firing blank cartridges over their graves, mourning the loss of others who remained in their steel caskets on the bed of the ocean, and—continued to take trips. Men and boys do not go to sea to avoid danger. Water means war even in peace-time. What the public failed to appreciate was that accidents were the exception and not the rule, that every day scores of submarines went from Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham and returned, and that safety is seldom news, whereas tragedy always is. Men read that B 2 had been run down by a liner in the Straits of Dover and was never seen again, that C 11 collided with a steamer in the North Sea and disappeared for ever, that another went down off Shanklin and failed to come up. These things were uppermost in the memory when submarines were mentioned.

There was plenty to talk about when Germany

announced that on and after the 18th of February 1915 she would blockade Great Britain. By means of her *unterseebooten* the ocean traffic of her hated rival would be stopped, the Kingdom starved, and the Grand Fleet worn down to such modest dimensions as her own much-vaunted High Sea Fleet could tackle without risk of defeat. It was an excellent programme, involving the lives of non-combatants and ensuring the performance of much dirty work. A goodly number of ships was sunk in course of time, including one or two naval units, but at the end of the first few weeks the loss was trifling statistically. From the 18th of February to the 24th of the following month only twenty-two vessels had been destroyed. The bag was poor considering that the arrivals and sailings probably totalled 7500. It was not long before the British Navy proved that it had the situation well in hand. Many a German submarine left Kiel, Heligoland, and other bases without returning to report. Fisher knew how and when they met their doom, and the position of their graves was duly noted on the special chart in Sir John Jellicoe's flagship. Von Tirpitz remained in ignorance. They simply did not return. It would have been unkind to tell him why. How this dramatic turning of the tables has been accomplished cannot be detailed.

Before the alleged blockade was begun Rear-Admiral Schlieper asserted that his nation wasted too



Charging a Torpedo Tube in a German Submarine

much time on purely humane things. "The idea of destroying the enemy's commerce and troop transports is something convincing, and produces agreeable feelings. In this weapon Germany has an advantage which must be used quickly and with all determination. Anyone under the enemy's flag who thinks this barbarous or inhuman may do so, but our device must be 'up and at 'em!'" The quotation of Wellington's alleged remark at Waterloo—he said nothing of the kind—is interesting, but one wonders whether the Admiral found Lord Fisher's reply as "something convincing" and conducive to "agreeable feelings."

Germany began hostilities with twenty-eight submarines in service and sixteen under construction. Six were also on the stocks to the order of foreign Powers and were doubtless taken over. Great Britain had more than twice the number, and we may be sure that more have left the shipyards on both sides since then. Germany's largest *unterseebooten* were vessels of 900 tons, with a cruising range of 4000 miles, and an armament of four torpedo tubes, two 14-lb. quick-firers, and two 1-pr. high-angle guns for use against aircraft. The submarine has her secrets more carefully guarded than any other ship, but it is allowable to give a general idea of her interior and the method by means of which she manages to travel in the underseas. She is obviously the most nerve-racking of all craft, but

many of the discomforts which obtained in the pioneers of this wonderful arm of the service have been overcome. Breathing "canned air" is by no means so unpleasant as it suggests, and the idea that the men are constantly mopping their foreheads on account of excessive heat is quite incorrect. Again, at a certain depth the motion of the sea is not felt, which is a distinct advantage over other vessels, the destroyer more particularly. When travelling on the surface the screws of the submarines are propelled by internal combustion engines using either petrol or heavy oil. These also drive the dynamos which charge the accumulators of the electric motors that are brought into service when the vessel is submerged. Under water the speed seldom exceeds ten knots, but when running light, or in cruising condition, as it is termed, eighteen knots is a fair average.

When on the surface the commander stands on the conning tower protected by a wind screen and muffled up like an Arctic explorer, with the ever-faithful coxswain at the steering wheel, and perhaps one or two of the crew on the narrow platform which constitutes the deck. The officer has merely to say a word and the gun has collapsed in its water-tight chamber, every man has disappeared down the hatch, and the few removable things have been stowed away. In less than half a minute a sailor is standing at the diving station ready to turn the wheel that admits the sea into the ballast tanks, his

eyes trained on the gauges that will presently record the depth ; the second coxswain has his hands on the internal hand-steering wheel at the control station, although the actual work is done by electricity ; the engineers have transferred their attentions to the motors, and the gunners have betaken themselves to the torpedo tubes.

Then the main hatch slams and is screwed down. The commander takes his position in the conning tower and not on it, looking through the two eye-pieces of the periscope, the slender shaft of which reaches above the surface of the water and by an ingenious arrangement of mirrors and prisms enables him to see what is going on when the boat is submerged. He calls out the depth he requires, the ballast tanks begin to fill, and in three minutes the back of the submarine is awash as she proceeds on her course. By means of her horizontal rudders, sometimes assisted by a pair of fins placed near the bows, she gradually disappears, nose foremost, controlled in much the same way as an aeroplane. The water rushing against them when they are set in a downward direction causes her to descend ; when they are moved to the opposite position she ascends. If you are a swimmer you know that when you dive immediately you curve your hands upward you begin coming to the surface. That is the principle of the submarine. It is quite unnecessary to 'blow out' the ballast tanks by means of compressed air,

unless the cruising condition is required. Torpedoes are also fired by compressed air, and in order that the trim of the ship may not be altered when one of these weapons is discharged, compensating tanks are provided, which fill with water as the torpedo speeds on its errand of destruction.

Without the help of the periscope a submarine is stone blind, and is therefore termed 'a daylight torpedo boat' by sailors of jealous disposition serving on other ships. For this reason it cannot work at night unless it is on the surface, which means the running of grave risks by the commander, who must necessarily expose himself and his craft to the possibility of being discovered by the never-wearying searchlight. The periscope is also something of a danger during the day on account of the little tell-tale wash which it leaves behind. The likelihood of observation is eliminated to a certain extent, because a submarine can attack a mile off, when it is doubtful whether either wash or tube could be observed, particularly in a rough sea. This long range, however, presupposes that the target is stationary or travelling at a very low speed, as were the *Cressy*, the *Aboukir*, and the *Hogue*. Probably 500 yards is the most favourable distance for torpedoing helpless merchant vessels, but a German commander must needs be wary of attacking men-of-war from such close quarters unless under cover of a decoy, as German craft have done on occasion. Fog

and spray, by obscuring the glass of the periscope, are natural enemies. In hazy weather it is also dangerous to anchor above water, as was proved some time ago, when a steamer collided with one of our submarines, the captain of the former mistaking the under-water craft for a small sailing-boat.

As the tubes are usually fixed, and in most cases placed forward and aft, it naturally follows that torpedoes can only be fired straight ahead or astern. To overcome this grave disadvantage considerable skill in manœuvring is required when an attack is to be made. In other directions the under-water craft does not have it all her own sweet way. On the surface the swift torpedo-boat destroyer is everlastingly cruising in anticipation of exhibiting her prowess as a slayer of sea-serpents, either by gun-fire or the more certain method of ramming. Aloft the eagle eye of the seaplane observer is constantly directed downward to spot submarines, which are usually distinctly visible to him as they make their way beneath the waves. You have only to look over a bridge crossing a running stream which does not receive sewage or other discolouring matter to test the reason for this, and the sea is usually much clearer than fresh water. Some time ago Norwegian airmen discovered German submarines in Bergen Fiord, with the result that the authorities promptly threatened to intern the vessels and their crews if they did not get outside the three miles limit.

Britain's Sea-dogs

On the 28th of November 1915 two Allied aviators performed an amazing feat, the honours being shared by Sub-Lieutenant Viney, of the Royal Naval Air Service, and Lieutenant le Comte de Sainçay, a Frenchman, who were in a biplane off the Belgian coast. At no great distance from Nieuport, and at a height of about 9000 feet, they saw the grey-brown hulls of two German *unterseebooten* travelling on the surface. One of them managed to escape when the flying machine was observed circling down. The other took an erratic course, so that if the bird-men attempted to drop a bomb she would stand less likelihood of being hit than by steering in a normal way, where mathematical calculation might be brought into play by the aviators. Possibly the reason why she did not dive was that there were sand-banks near. At over 900 feet Lieutenant de Sainçay dropped a bomb that fell on to the turret and did considerable damage. A minute or two later this was followed by a second missile, which crashed on the back of the ill-fated vessel and completed the wreck. The sea flowed in, and she sank, leaving no trace other than a great pool of oil on the surface. The performance reflected the highest possible credit on both officers: on the observer who dropped the bombs with almost uncanny accuracy, and on the aviator who steered the machine with such wonderful skill.

Two German aviators were not so fortunate.



A German Taube comes to Grief
MONTAGUE DAWSON

While looking for British submarines they lost control and descended in the sea, where they remained for hours until a Danish fishing-smack rescued them.

Harbour defences constantly menace the submarine. Probably the most marvellous escape from entanglement is related by a sailor who was serving in one of the under-water craft belonging to our French Ally. "We left port on Saturday morning," he asserts, "and on the following morning at three o'clock we were within two miles of one of the enemy's ports. At six o'clock we dived and, at the rate of three miles an hour, proceeded toward the entrance to the port. At 7.30 A.M., on drawing near to the boom protecting the harbour, we caught sight of several battleships, but we could not think of torpedoing them, as the boom afforded them protection. Shortly afterward these and several destroyers passed within a short distance of our craft, and, in order to make our aim more accurate, we drew nearer to them. But suddenly our submarine was caught. We could neither go forward nor astern, as the rudder was held tightly by steel cables.

"We were drawn upward almost to the surface," adds the writer; "then the enemy's torpedoes came speeding toward us and seemed to shave our hull. It was a miracle that we were not struck. The shells were disturbing the water all around us. We thought that we were done for, and we patiently awaited the explosion which would deliver us from

this cruel suspense. Death seemed inexorably slow in coming to my comrades and myself. Meanwhile we did not give up all attempts to escape. We weighted our vessel and all pressed together on the steering wheel. Suddenly the cable broke, and we dived at full speed to a depth of eighteen yards. We then attempted to get away. Finally, two hours later, we were completely free of our pursuers. We, however, only rose to the surface in the evening, after being submerged for twelve hours."

For a submarine to succeed in torpedoing another of the same breed is a very rare feat. A German commander saw a submersible of a dull grey colour approaching, and quite naturally took it to be a British under-water craft. He promptly sank it. Much to his consternation he afterward found that the ill-fated boat over which he had scored so easy a victory was not a foe but a friend disguised as a trap for ships flying the red or white ensign. The biter was bit with a vengeance.

A similar case, although the duel was fought between enemies, was reported in August, 1915, by the *Stampa*, of Turin. An Italian submarine and a destroyer were going along when the periscope of another under-water craft became visible. It belonged to the Austrian U 12, which was the first to fire, and scored a miss. The Italian submarine accepted the challenge, and for an hour and a half the two played the naval equivalent of hide-and-seek,

both endeavouring to manœuvre into a position for an effective discharge. Eventually the Austrian boat was cornered. The Italian launched two torpedoes from her forward tubes, striking her opponent amidships and sending her to the bottom. On another occasion the Italian submarine *Medusa* and an Austrian submarine engaged in mortal combat, with the result that both perished.

The mine is a murderous trap for " the deadliest of the things that keep the sea." In June, 1915, an enemy submarine come across a German mine in the neighbourhood of the island of Borkum. The commander and one or two of the crew were saved, but all the others were drowned or killed outright by the explosion. Lieutenant Donald F. O'C. Brodie and twenty men lost their lives in the British submarine D 5, which met a similar fate. The French submarine *Saphir*, while penetrating the Dardanelles, endeavoured to avoid mines near Nazaro, and in doing so struck the bottom with great force. The Commander managed to ascend to the surface, but although the crew were saved he refused to abandon his ship, which was in such a damaged condition that she sank almost immediately.

Some under-water craft are lost by reason of accidents which are never ascertained. The loss of the Australian submarine AE 1 is a case in point. In the early days of the war she disappeared while

cruising in deep water, although the weather was good and the sea calm, taking with her thirty-five officers and men, some of whom belonged to Portsmouth and the Naval Reserve, who had volunteered to help in training the Commonwealth Navy. She and her sister ship AE 2 made their way from Barrow to Sydney, a distance of some 12,500 miles, under their own power, the longest submarine voyage on record, but both proved unfortunate. AE 2 was sunk on the 30th April 1915 when endeavouring to enter the Sea of Marmora. Fortunately none of the crew was lost. They were taken prisoners by the Turks and removed to a place in Asia Minor, where they were kindly treated.

As we have seen on a previous page,[1] large cruisers and battleships have attendant destroyers to ward off the attentions of submarines, either by gun-fire or ramming. The first German submarine to be destroyed in the Great War perished as a result of both means of attack, although the victor happened to be a light cruiser of 5400 tons boasting the proud name of the *Birmingham*. The British ship was cruising with others about 160 miles from the low-lying coast of the enemy when a look-out man saw a periscope approaching. According to accounts given by sailors on board—there has been no official report—the first shot completely shattered

[1] See Chapter IX.

the tube. The *Birmingham*, however, offered a respectable target to the submarine, for it was conceivably possible that a torpedo had been inserted in one of the tubes ready for firing at the same moment as the skilful gunner on the cruiser had blinded the enemy. Captain Arthur M. Duff immediately altered his course so as to run no risk of that kind. U 15 did the only thing possible for her in the circumstances : she disappeared under the water. Eventually she must come to the surface. The problem of where and when was not easy of solution, but it was solved by the officers of the *Birmingham*, who scanned the sea with the vigilance of a policeman hunting for a burglar. Several of the lieutenants had been asleep below when the bugle went, and were now standing on the deck in pyjamas, glasses to eyes, eagerly hunting for the blind submarine. Suddenly something dark was seen to emerge from the wilderness of waters. This time one of the guns of the *Birmingham* literally crumpled up the conning tower, the bows of the cruiser swung round, there was an ugly crash as they grated against the derelict, and U 15 was on her way to the bottom of the North Sea.

The submarine was of about 300 tons displacement, and therefore not of the latest design, although the surface range of action was 1500 miles. The crew consisted of twenty officers and men, all of whom were drowned. It is a wonderful story of the

complete absence of 'nerves' at a trying moment, of coolness when confronted with the unexpected, and of conspicuous efficiency.

Some little while afterward a Bavarian newspaper printed what purported to be the true narrative of a man who served on one of the submarines in the flotilla to which luckless U 15 was attached. According to the narrator the noise of the motors when they are going full speed is so excessive that the crew cannot hear each other speak, which is probably an exaggeration, and certainly does not obtain in British craft. "We were ten days on the way," he continues. "We did not know where the ship was going. 'To death or to victory! More than that I don't know myself at present,' said our commander, and then we went out to sea with the other submarines; at first together, then we separated. The U 15 we never saw again. She fell before the enemy. All the way along the English coast we went, at times under water. Six hours' work and six hours' sleep for the whole ten days. So the days passed by—a little while under, a little while on top, that was the only variation. Then for once there came a sensation. One after another had to leave his place for a minute and take a peep through the periscope. It was the prettiest picture I ever saw. Up there like a lot of peaceful lambs lay an English squadron without a care, as if there were no German sea-wolves in armoured clothing.

"For two hours we lay there under water on the outposts. We could with certainty have succeeded in bringing under a big cruiser, but we must not. We were on patrol: our boat had further work to do. It was a lot to expect from our commander. So near to the enemy and the torpedo must remain in its tube! A hunter may feel the same who, before deer-stalking begins, spots on his hunting trail a fine buck thirty paces in front of him."

The latter part of the yarn reminds us of the old proverb that "stuffing is good for geese." We will let it stand as an excellent example of the bluff that serves to keep the German public optimistic. It is quite likely that the crew saw some of Jellicoe's "peaceful lambs," but it is more than probable that the self-denying commander was precluded by the Admiral's defensive measures from making them into maritime mutton.

At Kiel a correspondent of *The New York World* succeeded in interviewing Commander Claus Hansen, of U 16, a sister ship of the *Birmingham's* victim. The officer bluntly admitted that the "blockade" of England was "fearfully trying to the nerves. Every man does not stand it." He then flatly contradicted the above assertion regarding noisy machinery by stating that when running undersea "there is a death-like silence," adding a few remarks for the consumption of neutrals who like to indulge in hero worship. "Day after day," he says, "in such

cramped quarters, where there is scarcely room to stretch the legs, where one must be constantly alert, with the tremendous strain on the nerves, I have sat or stood for eight hours, with my eyes glued to the periscope, peering into the brilliant glass until my eyes and head have ached. When the crew is worn out we seek a good sleep and rest under the water, the boat often rocking gently, with a movement like that of a cradle."

Destroyers are not constructed for ramming, but on several occasions during the war they have made good use of their knife-like bows, and returned to port with a broken nose and the loss of a submarine to their credit. In October, 1914, the *Badger*—an honoured name in the Navy, since it was borne by the first ship commanded by Nelson—was leading a flotilla of destroyers off the Dutch coast when the look-out sighted the wake of something moving about 100 yards ahead. It was dark, and the ships were proceeding without lights. Apparently the *Falconer* also had her suspicions, for she flashed her searchlight full on the mysterious object, which proved to be an enemy submarine. An officer and some of his men were standing on the conning tower, but there was no time for overtures, and the *Badger* struck her obliquely. Almost simultaneously one of the two 4-in. guns fired a shell which perforated the skin of the under-water craft.

Ariel, a T.B.D. of the same class as the *Badger*,

rammed U 12 in the following March, sending the submarine to the bottom and rescuing ten of her crew of twenty-eight. This particular pirate had only one victim to her record, a little steam collier called the *Downshire*, which she sunk off the Calf of Man by means of a bomb placed on board and not by direct torpedo-fire. A sailor summed up the case against U 12 by remarking that "there was nothing to write home to mother about such an heroic deed."

The *Thordis*, a collier of 500 tons, was making its way from Blyth to Plymouth on the 28th February 1915. The voyage had been of the dull and monotonous type to which the crews of coasting vessels are accustomed, with something more than a capful of wind to make the sea lumpy and undue haste impossible. At no great distance from grey old Beachy Head the second mate saw something in the distance which looked suspiciously like a periscope. The officer went up to the master and told him. Captain Bell needed no second warning, but running up the ladder to the bridge, distinctly saw the long narrow tube which might herald disaster cutting the water. The twelve hands were then called on deck, and some of them told to stand by the boats in case the submarine should prove to be German. All doubt was dispelled a few minutes later. The sea-serpent crossed the bows of the collier and took up a position on the port beam.

Such a manœuvre meant but one thing, and that one thing came speeding through the water like an arrow in air, missing its target because a kindly wave lifted the bows of the vessel at the psychological moment and let the torpedo pass under without injury.

"Hard a' starboard!" shouted Captain Bell.

The staunch little boat flung her nose round and made toward the submarine with all the dashing spirit of a T.B.D., though she boasted no great speed and was not used to naval work. The periscope kept in line with the bows for one, two, perhaps three minutes, when the collier and her 700 tons of black diamonds came crashing down on the enemy, her hull scraping against the keel of the *Thordis* as the latter passed over it. When Captain Bell looked back the periscope had disappeared and the sun was revealing the colours of the rainbow as oil slowly spread over the spot where the duel had taken place. It is thus that submarines shed their life blood.

In due course the *Thordis* was examined in dry dock at Devonport, and Admiral Sir George Egerton, the Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth, made his report. The survey revealed that the ship had lost a propeller blade as a result of the encounter, that the bottom plates of the hull had been scraped, and that "in all probability" the submarine had been sunk. The Lord Mayor of London subsequently presented Captain Bell with the award of £500 offered by the

editor of a shipping journal to the captain and crew of the first merchant ship to sink an enemy submarine. In addition the sum of £200 was granted by the Admiralty for division among the crew.

The plucky master was also honoured in a way which shows how keenly the Lords Commissioners of the senior service appreciate talent when they have the opportunity. He was granted a temporary commission of Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve, and the King awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross. His Majesty conferred the decoration personally, congratulating Lieutenant Bell on his achievement, and asking the newly gazetted officer for full details.

Germany announced that U 12 had only suffered slight damage and duly returned to her base, but Berlin reports are not always strictly true, particularly when disasters are concerned.

"My highest reward," said the frank, blue-eyed sailor with the good-humoured, clean-shaven face who left the bridge of a collier for one of his Majesty's ships, "is that I have been permitted to do something practical in the defence of my country."

That is the spirit which has made the British Empire, the greatest afterthought in history.

CHAPTER XV

THE SIGN OF THE SKULL AND CROSS-BONES

Sing a song of th' ships that speed
Where Max K. Horton sets th' lead.
It ain't no good for th' Huns to plead,
When he's about he'll have their bleed.

Sing a song of th' boys in white
Who sail right up th' North Sea Bight,
Potterin' about all day an' night
Sendin' the Huns right out of sight.

Sing a song of th' old tin whale
That hunts about in calm an' gale,
Churnin' th' sea till it turns quite pale,
For Britons never show their tail.

THIS is the chantey of the underseas. The commanders of British submarines have done all and more than the song admits. Yet we find when we come to sum up the whole matter that two outstanding achievements stand to their credit. Had there been a third it would doubtless have fallen to them, but the mathematics of the service stops at two. In their uncanny craft they have maintained the glorious traditions of a glorious profession and set up others for their successors of a later age. The Navy and the nation could expect nothing more of them. The sinking of

enemy ships, the reconnoitring of jealously guarded harbours, the vigilance demanded of them during the passage of transports, the piercing of the mine-strewn Dardanelles, saving of life and speeding to death find their place in this testimony to their worth. For the first time they have had a taste of actual fighting conditions, and it has agreed with them. Before, it was merely playing at war when manœuvres were in progress, and practising to make perfect when the Red had proved victorious or the Blue had tactically annihilated the Red. Like the aviators, these men without fear seem to meet with fewer accidents now that greater risks are run. They thrive on danger and win Victoria Crosses for conspicuous gallantry.

There is a certain British submarine known as E 9 which trails the White Ensign at her stern and displays two very unofficial-looking flags on her periscope. Her commander is a man of great good humour, who has made the name of Horton famous, and inspired the Germans with a lively dread of E 9. The two unauthorized flags are white and yellow, with a most ominous skull and cross-bones on each. The men on her depot ship glibly call Lieutenant-Commander Max Kennedy Horton 'the double-toothed pirate,' which is unjust, seeing that he does not emulate the deeds of the sea rovers attached to the German Fleet. He roams about in search of legitimate prey, with no love of murder on the high

seas, despite the bloodthirsty insignia on the periscope of his submarine. Like poor Cradock, the hero of the battle off Coronel, Horton received the Board of Trade silver medal for gallantry in saving life when the P. & O. *Delhi* was wrecked. He was then a lieutenant on H.M.S. *Duke of Edinburgh*, his thoughts centred on big ships as they are now on smaller craft whose ways are mysterious and whose doings are dark.

Horton's first coup was the sinking of the *Hela*, a small protected cruiser of 2000 odd tons. E 9, poaching in company with another submarine on German preserves, saw the ship close to the coast of the Fatherland, and about six miles south of Heligoland. She crept along stealthily, carefully took the range, and fired two torpedoes—they call them 'rooties' in the Navy. The commander wanted to make quite certain of his game. One missed and the other hit. When the officers of the *Hela* looked around for their enemy, not so much as a ripple disturbed the surface of the water that could be taken to indicate the spot where a submarine might have disappeared. There was not an eighth of an inch of periscope to shoot at. Horton was below, treating his crew to a selection on a gramophone, followed by a little game of bridge to pass the time. After what he considered to be a sufficient interval, the commander took a peep to see how affairs were progressing above. They were entirely satisfactory.

The prisms and lenses revealed a cruiser with a dangerous list to starboard. There was another little trip beneath the waves, and when next the inquisitive commander used the periscope he found that the *Hela* had joined the under-water craft that never reappear. According to German reports, nearly all her complement of 187 officers and men were saved.

This happened on the 13th September 1914. On the 11th of the following month E 9 was off the Ems river, anxious to snipe something. Presently a destroyer came along, the forward tubes sped forth their deadly 21-in. weapons, and within three minutes the ship had capsized, the survivors being rescued by a cruiser. "Look at her; the beggar is going down!" shouted Horton.

The little white flag is the 'tuft' of S 126, the yellow one that of the *Hela*, the first two German ships to be sunk by a British submarine. The destroyer had a displacement of 420 tons and an armament of three 6-pr. guns and three torpedo tubes. In a dispatch Commodore Keyes correctly referred to Horton as "a most enterprising submarine officer," and submitted his name for favourable consideration to the Lords of the Admiralty, with the result that he was promoted to Commander and awarded the Distinguished Service Order. It is said that on this occasion Horton lost a wager because he had declared that the next vessel which fell to his

lot would be a battleship. His bet was just a little too previous, that was all. The enemy was not exercising the larger units of the High Sea Fleet at the North Sea end of the Kiel Canal, consequently there was no big fry to catch. Had there been Horton would have 'made good' without doubt.

In the summer of 1915 Horton had transferred his cruising ground to the Baltic, which German commanders considered safer for parading purposes —that is to say, until the 2nd of July. On that day the *Pommern*, a pre-Dreadnought of 13,200 tons, with a powerful armament of four 11-in. and fourteen 6·7-in. guns, was taking an airing with her company of over 700 officers and men. All went well until the commander of E 9 saw her coming along. Our particulars leave off here, excepting that it was officially announced at Petrograd that the attack which he made was successful. For this exploit the Tsar decorated Horton with the Order of St George (Fourth Class).

The first naval V.C. of the war was granted to Lieutenant Norman Douglas Holbrook "for most conspicuous bravery" in the Dardanelles. He commanded B 11, a comparatively small submarine of a little over 300 tons displacement. In this he threaded his way in a difficult current under five rows of mines, calmly torpedoed the guard ship, and returned without so much as scratching the paint, despite the gun-fire of the forts and the manœuvres

of mosquito craft. Holbrook was duly decorated by the Admiral with a cardboard Iron Cross, to the intense amusement of all concerned. The sinking of the *Messudiyeh* was of no great consequence in itself, because the battleship was obsolete, but the consummate coolness of the British commander and his brave crew of sixteen officers and men must have caused considerable consternation in Constantinople, where the Dardanelles was regarded as absolutely impregnable to every conceivable type of craft, and had certainly defied the larger ships of the Allied Fleet. The old battleship, which displaced 10,000 tons, had been launched at Blackwall so far back as 1874. Her armament consisted of two 9·2-in. breech-loaders, a dozen 6-in. quick-firers, and twenty-six smaller guns. The complement probably totalled 600 officers and men. Later on it was reported by the Turks that the crew had been able to leave the ship before it sank at its anchorage "as the result of a leak." On the other hand, information came to hand from a reliable source to the effect that the *Messudiyeh* turned turtle within a few minutes, drowning the majority of her crew, twenty-three of whom were rescued three days later by cutting a hole through a portion of the hull that remained above water.

In a letter printed by the London *Daily Mail* a member of the crew of B 11 furnishes us with particulars of this fine exploit. "We were con-

gratulated by all ships out here," he writes, "by the C.-in-C. Admiralty and C.-in-C. Malta, so you can bet we are quite pleased over it. To tell the truth, we all left letters behind in case of accidents. But I am very thankful there was no cause to post them. Our skipper proved himself to be a very cool hand, and I am sure we would all go anywhere with him now.

"The *Messudiyeh* opened fire on us as soon as we let go our torpedo. She must have seen us before we fired, but too late to do us any damage, although we heard the shots whizzing around our conning tower, and then we went aground on the shoal after firing at her ; it was a jolly good job there was thirty feet of water there ; they would have finished us off if it had only been about ten feet. I can tell you we were just thinking about saying good-bye for five or ten minutes. . . . I was working in spells, with our second coxswain on the steering wheel, and the skipper complimented us on the steering, as the current made it difficult to keep a straight course. We all felt rather queer after coming to the surface. I thought the roof of my head was lifting off ; but we have got rid of the effects now and are ready for another try." At one period of the voyage the submarine was submerged for nine hours.

Lieutenant Holbrook, who has four officer brothers serving in the Army, was awarded the sixtieth V.C. won in the Navy, while his second in

command, Lieutenant Sydney Thornhill Winn, was made a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order. To-day every member of the gallant crew wears the Distinguished Service Medal. Before leaving home, Holbrook promised his mother to be "careful." Had he been otherwise B 11 would never have returned.

Lieutenant-Commander Edward Courtney Boyle, of submarine E 14, also won the Victoria Cross in connexion with the great Gallipoli campaign. He not only dived his vessel under the mines of the tortuous Dardanelles, but entered the Sea of Marmora. He succeeded in sinking two Turkish gunboats, two transports, one of which was heavily laden with troops, and compelled a small steamer to run aground. The Admiral frankly confessed that "it is impossible to do full justice to this great achievement, and that his Majesty the King's appreciation and rewards for this service have throughout the Allied Fleet given universal satisfaction." The two other officers of the submarine, Lieutenant Edward Geldard Stanley and Acting Lieutenant Reginald Wilfred Lawrence, R.N.R., were decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross, while each member of the crew earned the Distinguished Service Medal.

These feats were performed between the last week of April and the 13th of May, the return journey being made on the 18th. It was in the latter month that a third naval officer, Lieutenant-

Commander Martin Eric Nasmith, won the most coveted distinction in the world for services rendered in the same sphere of operations. He was already known in the Navy as a man of great promise, for he had taken the King and Prince Albert for a trip in a submarine, and in the Cuxhaven raid of Christmas Day had picked up five men from three of the seaplanes.[1] With E 11 he cleverly penetrated into the famous sea of mirages, where he destroyed a large Turkish gunboat and sank a ship loaded with a vast quantity of ammunition for heavy howitzers, several gun mountings, and a 6-in. gun. He next turned his attention to a supply ship, which he successfully torpedoed at Rodosto, an important port on the Thracian coast. He then managed to sink two more store ships and to run a fourth ashore. The commander, still unsatisfied with his work, proceeded a farther seventy miles and actually entered the Golden Horn, torpedoing a transport berthed alongside the arsenal of Constantinople. This is according to the Admiralty report, but another account has it that a lighter laden with firebricks was destroyed, and the German Levant steamer *Stambul*, which was lying alongside, was so badly holed that she had to be beached on the Asiatic shore to prevent her sinking. The raid caused a panic in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the populace rushing about shouting : " The

[1] Seven seaplanes were used, and all the pilots returned safely.

Russians are coming!" So great was the consternation amongst the Turkish troops that those which had embarked were landed for fear of the transports being struck. The forts opened fire, but the only damage done to E 11 was to the periscope, which narrowly missed being shot away. While recrossing the mine-field in the Sea of Marmora the little band of heroes had an amazingly narrow escape from total destruction. The submarine caught the steel cable of a mine, which providentially did not strike the side of the ship. She towed the deadly enemy eleven miles before it was cast off.

The commander of E 11 was thirty-two years of age when he made what is admitted to be the finest coup of the war underseas. At school he was not brilliant, though he had marked aptitude for "inventing things." Many coming men of Britain, on whom the Imperial destiny of the race will depend in the near future, are built that way, and the record of Nasmith should inspire them to further effort. Genius and heroism sometimes go together, but not always.

A tragedy relieved by deeds of superb bravery was the loss of E 15 while exploring the mine-field near Kephez Point, about three miles below the Narrows. She started off on what was to be her last voyage on the night of the 16th of April 1915. All went well until about 6.30 A.M. on the following morning, when she was urged forward

by a strong current on Kephez Point. Here she took the ground in such shallow water that her conning tower was visible. The Turkish batteries opened fire, wounding several members of the crew, who were made prisoners and marched off to Constantinople. The dull roar of the guns echoed and re-echoed among the hills and cliffs of the peninsula until it reached the ever-listening ears of the sea-dogs on the British ships in the Ægean Sea. Without the loss of an unnecessary minute an aeroplane was up and speeding in the direction of the distant peals of artillery thunder. Off the promontory the pilot saw far down below him the grey form of the unfortunate submarine, and according to the Turkish Headquarters Staff several bombs were thrown in the hope of destroying the vessel. If this were so, they certainly failed to do material damage. Had the firing of the batteries continued that would have been the end of the incident so far as the Admiral was concerned. The wily Turks, however, had no idea of turning one of the most modern of British submarines into a target. They knew that if they were sufficiently quick in their salvage operations they could put her to far better use than that. E 15 would make a very desirable addition to their scanty Navy and also help their German friends to discover much-desired information regarding certain valuable engineering secrets.

Probably the Turks measured the likelihood of

swift decision on the part of the British Admiral by the slowness of British diplomacy. If so, they were grossly deceived. The return of the aviator marked the beginning of various operations for preventing the stranded vessel from being recovered by the enemy. Submarines and aircraft were employed for the purpose, but fortune did not attend their efforts. Destroyers were sent, to be baffled by the searchlights and heavy fire that was kept up from the shore. On the following day two battleships were ordered to see what they could do at long range. The *Triumph* and the *Majestic* hurled 10-in. and 12-in. shells in the direction of E 15, receiving in return the ineffectual bombardment of batteries stationed on either shore. Like the smaller fry, they came back baffled.

Nothing further was attempted until the evening. When it was dark volunteers were called for to man a couple of picket boats fitted with dropping-gear for small torpedoes. There was to be a cutting-out expedition under novel conditions, attended by the maximum of danger. Consequently there was no lack of candidates anxious to take part. The leader was Lieutenant-Commander Eric Robinson, of the *Vengeance*, in whom every one put the most implicit faith. He had already shown his mettle by fixing a charge to a gun in an abandoned Turkish fort while it was under heavy fire and blowing it up unaided. On that occasion the marines who were with him

were wearing white uniforms, and he knew that as soon as they emerged from cover they would be so many moving targets for the enemy. He therefore crossed the intervening space alone and did the job. Such an officer could be relied upon for cool judgment in a warm corner.

The little band started off on their perilous undertaking. Robinson was in the picket boat of the *Triumph*, assisted by Lieutenant Arthur Brooke Webb, R.N.R., and Midshipman John Woolley, while the *Majestic's* boat was under Lieutenant Claude Godwin. They had not gone far before searchlights lit up the darkness and flashed across the leader. This surprise was followed by a torrential shower of shot from the shore. The coxswain, steering by candlelight, was apparently no more concerned at the heavy fire that spattered the water than if the Turks had been using a pea-shooter. He just went on watching the compass by the flickering flame until the boat was within range. Torpedo No. 1 sped on its mission. The men counted the seconds that must intervene before the explosion. They might have been counting yet, for it was a misfire. The water was dark again now. The beams of light had not been quick enough to follow the course of the little craft. As they searched, one shaft accidentally lit up the stranded submarine. Godwin saw it, took up his position, and fired. A second miss! He launched

another torpedo. It struck the submarine. A shell sang through the air and shattered the stern of Robinson's boat, which began to fill rapidly. Once again the searchlights did the brave Tars a good turn. They enabled the *Triumph's* boat to see exactly what had happened and to take off their companions in distress, including one poor fellow who was so badly wounded that he died on the return voyage. This was the only casualty, although over 200 rounds were fired from one fort a few hundred yards distant and quick-firing guns were spitting death from the shore at short range.

On the following morning, in order to make assurance doubly sure, a submarine stole up and cautiously peeped at E 15 from below, while an aeroplane took observations from above. Never had the wreck of a British ship excited such genuine joy. She lay under the gaunt cliffs completely shattered. The naval volunteers had not entered the jaws of death for nothing.

A few days later the commander of the expedition was specially promoted to the rank of Commander on the recommendation of Vice-Admiral de Robeck. By a strange concidence the fathers of the officers who took part were Kent clergymen. Three cheers for these valiant "sons of the manse."

CHAPTER XVI

THE CAPTAIN WHO KNEW NO FEAR

THE year 1915 opened with disaster for Great Britain. Tragedies on land and sea darkened its boisterous dawn. Near London two passenger trains collided, killing nine persons and injuring twenty-six. In the Channel H.M.S *Formidable* was torpedoed and sank, and of her complement of 746 officers and men only 201 were saved. She was a battleship which gave her name to a class of eight pre-Dreadnoughts completed in 1901–1904, and the fourth of an ancestry commemorating the capture of the French *Formidable* in the battle of Quiberon Bay. Two of them are now no more, the *Bulwark* having been blown up at Sheerness on the 26th November 1914, while the *Irresistible* was mined on the 18th of the following March. The *Formidable's* displacement was 15,000 tons, her speed 18 knots, and she was armed with four 12-in. and twelve 6-in. guns, twenty-six smaller weapons, and four submerged torpedo tubes. Her armour varied from 13-in. on the barbettes to 3-in. on the protective deck, with 9-in. amidships, 12-in. on the conning tower, and 6-in. on the casemates. She was refitted in 1908–1909, and

since the beginning of September, 1914, had been commanded by Captain Arthur N. Loxley as a unit of Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly's squadron.

If you would know the type of gentleman who walked the fore-bridge of this very useful battleship let me tell you that he found sufficient time in the midst of his arduous duties to dispatch a Yuletide gift to an old lady who for nearly a quarter of a century was nursemaid in his father's household. You may think this a trifling matter, but 'circumstances alter cases.' An officer on active service is not a gentleman of leisure. His mind is never free from care. With Captain Loxley this thought for others was a dominant characteristic. He never spared himself—that is his biography in miniature. His first care when he knew that the *Formidable* had been struck was for the safety of the remainder of the squadron. He directed operations with extraordinary coolness from the moment of the disaster till the waters closed over his head, showing no fear, betraying no anxiety for himself.

In the letter which accompanied his Christmas present to Mrs Mary Neal, his "dear old Nan-Nan" as he affectionately called her, there is a sentence which shows how the drab and sinister thread of irony is apt to be woven in the warp and woof of the naval officer's life, and by force of contrast shows more conspicuously than the brighter colours: "We

are having really quite a quiet time, but you never know when anything may happen."

In the same letter he remarks that his son Peter "was much braver going to school than I was." The Captain never liked leaving home, which is another little insight into his character. A third is to be found in his love for his terrier Bruce, who remained with him to the last, and went down with the ship and his master. The body of the faithful little animal was washed ashore at Abbotsbury and interred in the gardens at Abbotsbury Castle, the residence of the Dowager Countess of Ilchester.

The *Formidable* was rolling and pitching her way westward through a blustery south-east gale when the first torpedo struck her. It exploded abaft the starboard magazine and abreast of No. 1 stokehold. So great was the force that at least one of the casemates was buckled, although by good fortune not sufficient to detonate the shells. Almost immediately after the crash the piercing notes of a bugle sounding "Off action" rose above the wind, followed by the scurrying of hundreds of feet. There was no confusion, only an orderly haste. The ship was brought head on to the wind not a moment too soon, for the inrush of water speedily flooded the boiler-rooms. Yet the stokers stuck to their task and drew all the fires before they clambered from their steel prison to whatever chance of life the open air afforded, and that was little enough. The thud

of the screws stopped, the electric light failed, the wireless was rendered useless. Apparently the water-tight doors were not closed until after the disaster—why this precaution had been neglected is a mystery. The poor old *Formidable* rolled in the trough of the sea like a great balk of saturated timber. "All hands on the upper deck," Loxley telephoned from the bridge. Then he signalled to other ships of the squadron to "Keep off," giving as his reason that he believed there was a submarine about. It was 2.20 A.M., and the majority of the officers and men had been sleeping peacefully enough in their bunks and hammocks when they were summoned from below. "Steady, men," shouted the Captain; "it's all right. No panic, men. Keep cool and be British. There's tons of life left in the old ship yet."

Four boats on the starboard side were got out with great difficulty and much labour, for there was no steam available, and the ship already had a heavy list, which prevented the others on the opposite side from being used. As the forty-two-foot cutter was lowered all the oars with the exception of half a dozen were rendered useless. They snapped when her crew used them to keep the boat from being staved in against the ship's side. Seventy men got into her. A barge capsized, flinging several of its occupants into the boiling cauldron. Another barge with about the same number of poor fellows managed to get away,

as did also a pinnace with three score men. Most of the boats received their load when they had got a sufficient distance from the dying leviathan to preclude disaster. The men just jumped into the sea, a distance of at least twenty-five feet, and swam until they were hauled out of the water. Everything possible was done for those who remained behind. Guided by his electric torch, Lieutenant Hawthorne, of the Royal Marines, led a party of volunteers in search of tables, stools, and chairs. These articles and every available piece of wood were brought up to the upper deck for the use of the men should the ship have to be abandoned.

While these measures were being taken a second explosion occurred, this time on the port bow. While it did something to rectify the list which was growing more menacing every minute, it also caused the *Formidable* to sink deeper and deeper in the water. For over two hours the sturdy old battleship fought for life. An effort was made to train the guns on the beam when the list to starboard again became marked, but it was found that the hydraulic pumps which manipulated the turrets were no longer working. She began to settle more rapidly now. Soon the casemates were awash. Tons of water poured in at every available source of entry, and not merely at the gaping wounds. Then she assumed an angle which enabled the sailors to stand on the port side as though it were a slanting



The Captain Who Knew No Fear

C. M. PADDAY

From the Great War Deeds Number of the Illustrated London News

deck. It was a triumph of discipline for the human element; a complete breakdown of man's mechanical achievements. Once again mind proved mightier than matter. Sailors and middies lined up, and stood shivering in the snow and sleet, some in uniform, others in pyjamas, all with their life-saving collars inflated. There was nothing more to be done for the ship. They awaited orders. A few were seeking solace in tobacco; a little crowd was singing "Tipperary." Loxley was puffing at a cigarette, and the chaplain was doing his best to cheer up the men.

"Into the water with you; she's going. Good-bye, lads. Every man for himself, and may God help you all," came the calm voice of the Captain. They slid down into the water; some on the other side literally fell into it. Commander Ballard continued to flash signals from the bridge, now practically vertical. Three mountainous waves, as though anxious to hasten her end, lunged against the exhausted battleship within the space of a minute, yet they did not completely engulf her. A shattered derelict, she struggled for life as a dying man with a strong will, then surrendered, taking with her the Captain Who Knew No Fear.

"It was one of the saddest sights I have ever seen in my life, and I never want to see another like it," an officer remarked to a representative of *The*

Daily Telegraph. "There was just the stern of the vessel with the two propellers and the rudder sticking out of the water, and plainly outlined against the sky. All this time a very loud hissing noise was coming from the sinking warship. I suppose this was the air escaping under the tremendous pressure. Sharp sounds were constantly heard from the interior of the vessel, caused by the engine and other heavy materials slipping out of their places. I expected to hear the explosion of some of the 12-in. shells, but could not detect this amongst the other noises. The vessel then disappeared entirely. . . . Captain Loxley went down with his ship, according to British custom. The last I saw of him was when he was standing on the boat deck, shouting to the men to get into the water."

A light cruiser rescued seventy-one members of the crew from one of the barges. They were the most fortunate of all. The other survivors were on the open sea fighting for their lives, lashed by the wind, drenched by the high-running sea, and numbed by the biting cold. For twenty hours fifty-seven men in a pinnace faced eternity for a second time, and so terrible were their sufferings that not a few of them would have welcomed death as the merciful dispensation of a kindly Providence. Snow and hail beat upon them. There was nothing to eat or drink. They toiled on almost without hope. Day

came and went. The dip, dip of the oars grew maddening.

Quite suddenly half a dozen white lights pierced the darkness, seemingly a great distance away, then two red lights shot out across the dreary waste of water. The boat was slowly turned toward the former. The crew, some of whom were on the verge of delirium, battled with the out-going tide. At the end of two weary hours no appreciable progress had been made. They tried to gain the red lights, straining at the oars with the energy that despair lends to her victims. The wind seemed to scream, "Give up! Give up!" the sea aiding and abetting by flinging itself against the craft and breaking over the sides. Then the lights appeared to be getting nearer and growing larger. At eleven o'clock the boat's keel struck something that sounded like shingle, proceeded a foot or two, and came to a stop. It was land, and across the way were houses and warmth. The men raised a feeble shout. A dark figure approached, walked into the surf, caught a rope flung from the pinnace, did many useful things. Others, attracted by the noise, ran down to the beach and lent a hand. Half a dozen dead men were lifted out; fifty-one half-dead men were carried ashore, three of whom surrendered to the grim enemy as they were borne to places where succour awaited them. And they had all been wished "A Happy New Year"! To-day six heroes of the *Formidable*

lie in the hill-side cemetery of Lyme Regis, overlooking the Channel, where the wind and waves that treated them so cruelly play a fitting requiem.

A cutter with seventy men remained to be accounted for. She was so badly damaged that a sailor took off his trousers, stuffed them into the hole, and sat there to keep the temporary patch in place. Those who were not at the oars helped to bail the boat with what caps and boots were available. After eleven exciting hours she came up with a sailing trawler, appropriately enough called the *Provident*, some fifteen miles from Berry Head. The little ship was running for shelter before the gale when Jack Clark, the third hand, sighted an open boat filled with what was unquestionably a shipwrecked crew. A scarf was tearing itself to pieces on an oar as a distress signal. Had he seen a whale his astonishment would not have been greater. The crew of the *Provident* did exactly what British fishermen always do when somebody is in a worse plight than themselves. They set about the hazardous task of rescue. Think what this meant in a mountainous sea, with the cutter riding a wave, and the trawler in the trough of it. The first job was to take a reef in the big brown mainsail and to set the storm jib. This having been accomplished, the skipper awaited his opportunity.

There came a moment when the cutter was to leeward of the *Provident*. The skipper gybed his

vessel. Had he bungled, the mast would have snapped. The hands tried three times to get a rope to the cutter, and failed. The fourth fling was successful. The dangerous task of getting the men out was rendered doubly difficult by the see-saw of the waves and the exhausted condition of many of the poor fellows. They were accommodated below while the brave little crew took the *Provident* to Brixham, where the storm-tossed mariners were landed and their wants attended to. Truly, "the isle breeds valiant creatures."

There is a very charming little sequel to this wonderful rescue. A few weeks later the crew of the trawler, Skipper William Pillar, William George Edwin Carter, John James Clarke, and Daniel Taylor, an apprentice of seventeen years of age, were summoned to Buckingham Palace. His Majesty pinned on the breasts of each of the heroes the Board of Trade silver medal for gallantry. "I congratulate you most heartily," he declared to the skipper, "upon your gallant and heroic conduct. It is, indeed, a great feat to have saved seventy-one lives. I realize how difficult your task must have been, because I know myself how arduous it is to gybe a vessel in a heavy gale." Turning to the lad, the King said : "You are small for your age, but you have taken part in a very gallant deed, and I congratulate you." Each was handed a voucher for the monetary award which the Admiralty had granted :

Pillar £250, Carter and Clarke £100 each, and Taylor £50. The gold medal of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society was also awarded to Pillar, together with £5, and a silver medal and £3 each to the others.

Coolness in danger, fortitude in peril, devotion to duty under the most terrible stress and strain, good humour and pluck are characteristics of the sea-dogs of Old England which did not become extinct with the passing of Nelson and his contemporaries. Had it been otherwise, this record of Captain Loxley and the men of the *Formidable* would not have been written.

In the Naval Museum of Berlin is shown a fragment of one of the battleship's boats, washed up on the Belgian coast. Germany is welcome to the trophy, a poor enough thing compared with the undying story which was added to the annals of British heroism on New Year's Day, 1915.

CHAPTER XVII

FIGHTING LAND BATTLES AT SEA

WHEN the gods seek entertainment they open a certain large volume called Britain's Book of Blunders. It is their *Punch*. The chapters that make them smile most of all come under the general heading of Military Adventures, perhaps because they usually differ in minor details only. The readers would laugh in derision were it not for the Roll of Honour that concludes each narrative. Appendices are frequently added, the list of valiant dead grows longer with the passing of the years. The latest blunder is indexed under Gallipoli.

The attempted forcing of the Dardanelles was the one definitely offensive campaign undertaken by Great Britain and France in Europe in 1914–1915. Had it succeeded it would have shortened the war, heartened the Allies, upset any intentions of the enemy on Egypt and Persia, probably secured the whole-hearted support of at least one hesitating neutral, done much to prevent the tinder of the Balkans from bursting into flame, released Russian oil and corn from the Black Sea, and enabled England to send much-needed munitions of war

to the Tsar's legions. It opened with a brilliant but unsuccessful attempt by the Navy and ended in a dual failure on the part of the Navy and the Army. Every arm of the two services was involved; each contributed its stirring chapter to an epic of amazing valour. The story will be told and retold when the legend of Jason sailing through the selfsame Straits with his Argonauts to fetch the coveted Golden Fleece has added another thousand years to its hoary old age. Tragedy and heroism are first cousins. The one grim, the other smiling, walked hand in hand often enough on the decks of the vast Armada that assembled in Mudros Bay, on the shell-swept shores of Suvla, Sed dul Bahr, Anzac, and the places of no name that became famous as the alphabetical landing-places of an Imperial race, beaches S, V, W, X, Y, in the great toe of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

When the giant struggle against Nature and their Turkish and German enemies was proceeding, and the Naval Division and *Fusiliers Marins*, the Australian and New Zealand volunteers, the regulars of the British and Indian Armies, the Territorials and Yeomanry, the Foreign Legion and *Armée Coloniale* of France, the sailors and mine-sweepers were pouring out their life blood, the operation was characterized by Mr Winston Churchill as a "gamble" and a "heart-shaking struggle." It had proved to be both long before the Army landed to

assist the impotent Fleet. Like many other gambles, it ended in disaster.

The beginning of the operations was not quite fair to the senior service, although it must be admitted that Admiral Carden, Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, was of opinion that the fortifications of the Dardanelles could be reduced by a regular and sustained naval bombardment. This belief was upheld by various British and French experts, including the war staff of the Admiralty, but excluding Lord Fisher. The omission of the First Sea Lord's support is significant, and Mr Asquith afterward admitted that the attack was undertaken "notwithstanding some doubts and hesitations which undoubtedly there were in the mind of our principal naval adviser at that time." The first phase of the gamble—there is no better term—was purely naval. Lord Kitchener told the Cabinet that he could not afford to give any substantial military support. The Compulsion Act was then unrecorded on the Statute Book. Had the Narrows been forced and Constantinople bombarded, Russian troops would have occupied the ancient capital of misrule. Napoleon, envying its unequalled strategic position, termed Constantinople "the Empire of the world."

The die was cast. Only 163 miles separated the entrance of the Dardanelles from the Golden Horn. Unfortunately they were not ordinary miles. They

teemed with formidable difficulties. Land fortifications, mines, floating torpedoes, submarines, those will-o'-the-wisps the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, plus the obsolete Turkish Navy—each and all would be used against the Armada. The Navy knew of these things. The Turks, stiffened by German officers, German ideas, German organization, also had surprises in store. People at home, ignorant of the hazardous character of the adventure, fondly imagined that the naval key could speedily unlock the rather rusty water-gates of the Near East.

The escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* was not merely an incident. It was a disaster. A few hours before the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany the Mediterranean Fleet came across these German ships in that great inland sea that washes the northern coast of Africa. It had them at its mercy, but war had not been declared. Diplomacy is cordially hated in the Navy, which prefers deeds to words and shells to syllables. The officers suppressed their thoughts, the bluejackets gave rein to them and forcibly expressed the unspoken opinions of the wearers of gold lace. Their hands were fettered though their guns were loaded. Apparently the German captains had been warned, for no sooner did they sight the British than they steamed eastward at full speed. Early in the morning of the 4th August 1914 the *Breslau*, a light cruiser of 4478 tons, mounting a dozen 4·1-in.

guns, was firing broadsides at the Algerian town of Bona, a fortified seaport and naval base, while the *Goeben* was bombarding Philippeville. The latter, one of the most powerful battle cruisers afloat, and the fastest vessel in the German Navy, accompanied by her satellite, was next heard of as having been driven into the Sicilian port of Messina after an exciting chase. On the 6th, anxious to escape disarmament and internment by staying in a neutral harbour longer than twenty-four hours, they departed with decks cleared for action with the Anglo-French squadron supposed to be awaiting them in the Straits outside the three-mile limit, the British at the south, the French at the north. Fortified by a telegram from the Kaiser assuring them that he was firmly convinced that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* would "fight their way through," the officers had made their wills and handed over their personal effects to the German Consul. With their bands playing "Die Wacht am Rhein," the ships steamed off in a southerly direction, the giant Dreadnought bristling with ten 11-in. and twelve 6-in. guns.

Then followed vague rumours of a heavy cannonade but no news of a contest, and the likelihood of the Germans escaping to the shelter of the heavily fortified naval base of Pola was discussed in London club-rooms, although war had not been declared between Austria and Great Britain. Conflicting messages reporting the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* as in

the Adriatic, off Greece, and in the Ægean Sea continued to reach England. "It is almost inconceivable that they are bound—as some reports suggest—for the Dardanelles." So wrote the naval correspondent of a much-respected national newspaper. Amsterdam, which glories in the fights of other folk, published a Corfu message of a naval battle. The Mediterranean mystery deepened with the passing of the hours. At last the Press Bureau announced, on the authority of the Admiralty, that "There are strong reasons for believing that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* have taken refuge in the Dardanelles, where they will be dealt with according to international law. With the dismantling and internment of these ships the safety of trade will have been almost entirely secured."

The unexpected had happened, but what was surmized as the sequel to the escape of the ships to Turkish waters on the 10th August did not materialize. There was a make-believe sale of them to the Ottoman Government. With refreshing humour the *Goeben* became the *Sultan Yawuz Selim* (Sultan Selim the Grim), and the *Breslau* the *Midillu* (Mitylene). The presumed end of the career of the cruisers proved to be the beginning. No blame whatever is attached to the British Admiralty for the intelligence conveyed to the public. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) forbids Germany to send her ships through the Dardanelles, and it was

believed that the Sublime Porte would deal with the refugees according to international law. In charge of the Turkish Navy was a British officer, Rear-Admiral Arthur H. Limpus, C.B. On 15th August he was relieved of his command. The pressure in the Mediterranean, momentarily relieved by the exit of the German men-of-war, was increased shortly afterward by deliberate acts of hostility, including the bombardment of Sebastopol on 1st November. The British Ambassador left Constantinople on the evening of that day. Ever since the arrival of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* the Turkish Government had made repeated assurances of their strictest neutrality. They were lying to gain time. In this they did not break with tradition. Had Turkey refrained from entering the conflict there would have been no Dardanelles gamble.

Rear-Admiral E. C. T. Troubridge, C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., Commander of the First Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, returned to England "in order that an inquiry may be held into the circumstances leading to the escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* from Messina Straits." The court fully and honourably acquitted the bearer of a name first made known to fame by Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge, that splendid fighter in the battle of the Nile and of St Vincent. Subsequently a party of bluejackets with Rear-Admiral E. C. T. Troubridge in command played a splendid part in the defence of

Serbia. The Board of Admiralty approved "in all respects" the measures taken by Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, but he shortly afterward returned home and was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Sackville H. Carden, an energetic Irishman who had served in the Egyptian War of 1882, fought at Suakin in 1884, and taken part in the Benin expedition of 1897. At the time of his appointment he was Admiral Superintendent of Malta Dockyard.

One stirring episode relieves this drab story of ill fortune. There happened to be in the Mediterranean a trim little British light cruiser named the *Gloucester*. She is a sister ship of the *Bristol* and the *Glasgow*, whose acquaintance we have already made.[1] On the night of the 6th August she came up with the *Breslau* and the *Goeben* in or near the Straits of Messina, the former trying by various artful manœuvres to entice the *Gloucester* away so that her larger consort might escape. Captain W. A. H. Kelly, aided by the moonlight, kept both ships under strict observation and refused to be shaken off. He followed them all night and the following day. According to one account the British opened fire at about 2 P.M. The fore 6-in. gun of the *Gloucester* barked out, and fell short. The shot was returned with interest by the *Breslau*, which fired a broadside that whizzed overhead and flung up mountains of

[1] See Chapter XI.

water. Before placing the next shell in position one of the gun-layers on the *Gloucester* spat on it for luck, a fond superstition in the Navy which worked well in this particular case, for it damaged one of the *Breslau's* funnels a few seconds later. With amazing dexterity the Captain dodged all the enemy's shots, though two of the boats were shattered. Had the battle cruiser turned upon the *Gloucester* it would have meant annihilation for the light cruiser, but she did not, probably because Captain Kelly gave her the impression that support was near at hand. He was certainly endeavouring to lead the enemy in the direction of the main squadron. The commander of the *Goeben*, however, was too wary to be enticed into a skilfully laid trap. As for the *Gloucester*, she hung on until she was either recalled or outdistanced. For this valiant service Captain Kelly was gazetted C.B. "The combination of audacity with restraint," runs the official record, "unswerving attention to the principal military object—namely, the holding on to the *Goeben* without tempting her too much—and strict conformity to orders constitute a naval episode which may justly be regarded as a model." The audacity of the British commander can be appreciated by comparing the broadside fire of the three vessels. That of the *Gloucester* was 355 lb., of the two Germans 8500 lb. ! It was afterward reported by merchantmen that the German Dreadnought had a considerable list,

and that the *Breslau's* funnels had been severely damaged.

The Italian steamer *Sicilia* was in the neighbourhood of the contestants while the action was going on. According to an eye-witness on board, "the cruiser followed them gamely until about 4 P.M., when the two big vessels disappeared behind the promontory (Cape Matapan), between the Greek coast and Cerigo Island." The *Gloucester* then hailed the *Sicilia*, which in due course was allowed to proceed, the passengers cheering and the British bluejackets waving their caps by way of acknowledgment. On the previous night the German steamer *Emir*, with stores and munitions for the enemy ships, had endeavoured to get through the Straits of Gibraltar under cover of darkness. She was pounced on by two torpedo boats and captured.

No official elucidation of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* mystery has been issued. The generally accepted idea is that the pursuit of the two cruisers was delayed on account of the necessity of covering the passage of a French army corps from Africa to France, and that when this had been successfully accomplished search was made in vain until the *Gloucester* got in touch with them.

Since the passage of the Dardanelles by the German ships reports of their doings have been more contradictory than before. The *Goeben* is supposed to have struck a mine in the Bosporus

which was so effective that it made two huge rents in her hull, been seriously damaged by a Russian squadron, had some of her guns dismounted for the defence of Constantinople, been docked in a sinking condition, and set on fire by shells. The *Breslau* has also been reported as having sustained almost every conceivable injury, including damage by mine and torpedo.

At daybreak on the 3rd November the bombardment of the Dardanelles began. A combined British and French squadron shelled some of the forts at the entrance at a range of between six and seven miles. The forts replied with their 9·2 Krupp guns and a few of larger calibre. No ships were hit, a solitary projectile alone falling in dangerous proximity to the floating targets, and there were no casualties. A gunnery lieutenant in the fore-top of one of the British ships had just begun to enjoy a cigarette, and was remarking to a comrade, "Well, that's all over," when a shell came flying across their line of sight, striking the water only about twenty yards off. The fort at Cape Helles, at the toe of the peninsula, was apparently damaged, for dense volumes of black smoke, lighted up by a column of flame, were observed to issue from it, followed by a dull roar which probably indicated the blowing up of the magazine. This preliminary skirmish was a kind of test case. The judge reserved his verdict.

On the 19th February 1915, exactly one hundred and eight years after Duckworth's passage of the Dardanelles, a much more serious attempt was made to reduce the outer forts at Cape Helles and Seddel Bahr, on the European side of the Straits, and of Kum Kale on the Asiatic side. Sed del Bahr and Kum Kale are almost opposite, and command the entrance, which is two and a quarter miles wide. The fleet included a battle cruiser, the *Inflexible*, recently returned from the battle off the Falkland Islands,[1] the British pre-Dreadnought battleships *Vengeance*, *Cornwallis*, *Triumph* and *Agamemnon*, commissioned between 1898 and 1904, the almost obsolete French battleships *Gaulois*, *Suffren* and *Bouvet*, commanded by Rear-Admiral Guépratte, accompanied by destroyers. There was also present the new seaplane-carrier and repair ship, the *Ark Royal*, a name borne by Howard of Effingham's flagship in the stormy days of 1588. The fleet was capable of bearing no fewer than thirty-six big guns of from 12-in. to 10-in. calibre on the forts. After shelling at long range with apparently good effect for over six hours, the firing in some cases being directed by an observation ship because it was not possible for all the vessels to see their targets, a change was made in the disposition of the fleet. The older vessels were ordered to move nearer inshore. This enabled their secondary armament, totalling sixty-six guns, varying from

[1] See Chapter XI.

7·5-in. to 5·5-in., to be brought into service. The burden of the fight, hitherto entirely one-sided, because the Turks had either not been able to reply or had been saving their ammunition for use at closer quarters, was now to be sustained by these half-dozen ships, supported by the long-range fire of the *Inflexible* and the *Agamemnon*. As the squadron drew closer the guns of the forts suddenly blazed out, which was sufficient proof that whatever destruction had been wrought by the previous bombardment was not vital.

When the bugles sounded "Cease fire!" the strongholds on the European side had lapsed into silence, while Kum Kale still spluttered at intervals. The success of the operation was afterward discovered to be very slight. A Turkish official *communiqué* naïvely admitted that "one soldier was slightly wounded by stone splinters," and added the intelligence that "three hostile armoured ships were damaged, one flagship heavily." As a matter of fact none of the Anglo-French vessels was hit, although shrapnel struck the cutter of the *Vengeance*, and the Admiral and the Captain of that vessel had a shower-bath from a shell that plunged into the sea a short distance from where they stood, causing a good-humoured laugh on the part of the officers. An imaginative Athens correspondent wired that a third of the Straits was already free, that it was hoped that the complete passage would be "forced in a

few days," and that frantic alarm prevailed at Constantinople!

Operations had to be suspended for a time owing to furious gales. They were resumed on the 25th, when hydroplanes assisted in the task of range-finding and noted the effect of the firing. The oil-driven super-Dreadnought, the *Queen Elizabeth*, beyond question the mightiest battleship afloat, made her first essay in warfare. The appearance of this brand-new ship must have been anything but a pleasant surprise to the enemy. The *Irresistible*, a sister ship of the ill-fated *Bulwark* which had been blown up at Sheerness in the last week of the previous November and of the torpedoed *Formidable*, also took part. These vessels, with the *Agamemnon* and the *Gaulois*, started pommeling the outer forts, now repaired to some extent, at long range. The eight 15-in. guns of the *Queen Elizabeth* fired broadside after broadside at the fort on Cape Helles, each shell weighing approximately a ton. Some of the breezy boys call them Lizzie's Headache Pills. This terrific onslaught, carried on well out of range of the forts, was ineffectively replied to by two 9·2-in. guns, the heaviest which the land battery boasted. The *Agamemnon* attacked Sed del Bahr, and was hit at 11,000 yards, killing three men and seriously wounding five. On the Asiatic side the *Gaulois* confined her attentions to Kum Kale, and the *Irresistible* to Orkhanieh, about a mile south of the latter.



The "Queen Elizabeth" in Action at the Dardanelles
CHARLES DIXON, R.I.
From a sketch by a naval officer

Half an hour before noon the *Vengeance* and the *Cornwallis*, covered by long-range fire, ran in and engaged Cape Helles, whose big guns had now been put out of action, and completely silenced it. The *Suffren* and the *Charlemagne* also made a determined attempt on the two forts on the opposite side of the Straits, boldly advancing to within 2000 yards of them, and pouring in a rain of shells that brought a feeble and half-hearted reply. The *Vengeance*, *Triumph*, and *Albion* were then ordered to complete their reduction. This was successfully accomplished toward the close of the day. One of the strongholds was believed to have been entirely manned by Germans.

Taking advantage of the remaining light the mine-sweepers got to work, and under cover of the Fleet began clearing the entrance of the Straits. On the following day four miles had been rendered navigable, enabling three battleships to enter and attack Fort Dardanus, overlooking Kephez Bay, on the coast of Asia Minor. The four 5·9-in. guns made poor practice, but a surprise came in the form of some new batteries which had been erected. Landing-parties then set off from the *Vengeance* and the *Irresistible*, completely demolished the forts of Cape Helles, Sed del Bahr, and Orkhanieh, and partially destroyed that of Kum Kale. The garrison of the last-mentioned stronghold was driven post-haste across the bridge spanning the River Mendere,

which was afterward rendered useless. Two new 4-in. guns, discovered skilfully concealed in the neighbouring village, and four Nordenfelts guarding the entrance were made incapable of further service. Unfortunately a body of Turkish troops hiding in the cemetery and elsewhere began sniping the Marines, and they were recalled, with the loss of one killed and three wounded.

Operations were again delayed by wind, rain, and fog, rendering long-range fire and aerial observation practically useless. They were resumed on the 1st March, when three battleships entered the Straits and attacked the fort and batteries at Kephez Point, on the Asiatic side. Another surprise awaited the sea-dogs, for howitzers and field guns assisted in the defence. Moreover, seaplanes found out that several new gun positions had been prepared. Two shells landed on the quarter-deck of the *Triumph*, one fell near the gun-room, and another reduced the furniture in the Captain's cabin to firewood. The French, stationing their ships in the Gulf of Saros, operated off Bulair, bombarding the batteries and the lines of communication. At night the scavengers recommenced their highly dangerous work under fire, while their comrades on the *Triumph* performed *The Shades of Nelson*, a farce written by a lower-deck hand, as an antidote to the tension of the day. On the 2nd the *Canopus*, the *Swiftsure* and the *Cornwallis* attacked two other forts, one of which was so

damaged that eventually it ceased to offer further resistance. This time all the ships were hit. The mine-sweepers continued their operations when their big brothers of the Navy had finished, going about their business with as little apparent anxiety as they manifest when trawling in the North Sea, and gradually creeping nearer and nearer to the Narrows, where formidable problems awaited solution. Enver Pasha, the Turkish War Minister, spoke truth when he asserted that "the real defence line lies farther on, where the difficult waterway deprives ships of their power to manœuvre freely and obliges them to move in a narrow defile commanded by artillery and mines."

Additions made to the Allied Armada showed that the naval authorities of both countries appreciated the strength of the positions that guarded the sea route to Constantinople, but the fact that on the 4th it was again found necessary to send landing-parties, covered by detachments of the Marine Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, to continue the clearance of the ground at the entrance to the Straits indicated that military operations would become absolutely indispensable in the near future. Indeed, the French Ministry of War had already decided to concentrate an expeditionary force in Northern Africa "ready to embark the moment the signal is given." The pity of it was that the campaign had been started without assistance on

land. Every day that passed made it evident that the Turks and their friends were gaining strength. In the neighbourhood of Sed del Bahr more concealed guns were destroyed, but at Kum Kale the landing was repulsed, with nineteen killed, three missing, and twenty-five wounded. "The net result of these operations against the outer works," writes Mr E. Ashmead-Bartlett with the authority of one who has studied the situation on the spot, "was to prove this : that although these reinforced earthworks might be smothered by shell-fire and the gunners driven to their bombproofs, under highly favourable conditions, yet the actual material damage inflicted by ships' shell was relatively unimportant, unless a direct hit was scored on the gun. Thus up to this point there was nothing to encourage great hope for the future."

On the 5th an attack on three of the European defences of the Narrows, forts Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia, Hamidieh II Tabia, and Namazieh, was begun by indirect fire from the *Queen Elizabeth*, supported by the *Inflexible* and the *Prince George*. All the forts sustained damage, and the magazine at Fort Hamidieh II Tabia blew up, depriving its two 14-in. guns of ammunition. A military station was destroyed by the *Sapphire*, which also fired on troops in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Adramyti. The day was especially noteworthy as marking the first attempt to reduce the defences of Smyrna, the

chief town on the coast of Asia Minor, by Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Peirse.

Two more strongholds were attacked by the mammoth battle cruiser, supported by the *Agamemnon* and the *Ocean*, on the following day. They flung their shells for twelve miles across the peninsula, stationing themselves in the Gulf of Saros and bombarding with remorseless fury forts Hamidieh I Tabia and Hamidieh III, in the vicinity of Chanak, on the Asiatic shore. While this method of attack, directed by airmen, precluded the possibility of a return fire from the forts, howitzers and field guns were not long in getting to work on the European side. Three shells struck the *Queen Elizabeth*, fortunately without causing damage of any importance. Five ships inside the Straits met with a particularly warm reception from the Suandere and Mount Dardanos batteries, and Fort Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia again opened fire. Nearly all the vessels were hit. The Mount Dardanos batteries were bombarded by four French battleships on the 7th and silenced, while the *Agamemnon* and the *Lord Nelson* pounded forts Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia and Hamidieh I Tabia, the strongholds already attacked by the *Queen Elizabeth* and her consorts, until they ceased to reply. It was warm work, for when the *Suffren* penetrated to the extreme limit of the minefield a splinter from a bursting shell fell at the French Admiral's feet. During these assaults and

operations the seaplanes were invariably in evidence. One machine was hit no fewer than twenty-eight times before the pilot was compelled to descend.

On the night of the 13th the light cruiser *Amethyst*, while attending the mine-sweepers in Sari Siglar Bay, was subjected to a terrific cannonade at close range. Shells screamed from the forts and mobile batteries, smashing a gun-shield on the upper deck. Plunging fire from howitzers played havoc below. Twenty-two poor fellows, mostly belonging to the engine-room and stokehold staffs, lost their lives, one afterward died of wounds and thirty-seven were wounded. One of the trawlers was sunk, and the bravery of the men who steamed through the zone of death—death from below and from above—without being able to offer the slightest defence beggars description. They just ploughed their way through it. Things had gone so well in the early part of that night. There had been no inquisitive searchlights from the shore, no booming of guns, nothing to betray the presence of the enemy. A Mohammedan feast, perhaps, that enjoined long prayers to Allah? Jack Tar thinks out things for himself, sometimes to his own satisfaction though not strictly in accord with facts. When the men got back to the shelter of the Fleet they knew the cause of their misfortune. It was the 13th. Fortunately the Navy does not nurse its grievances, it weans them. The worst was yet to come.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHAMBLES OF GALLIPOLI

IN the attempt to pierce the Dardanelles no capital ship had so far sustained anything approaching a mortal wound. Four months had come and gone since the beginning of the great adventure, and all the heavy fathers of the Fleet remained in their normal health. Some of them were bruised, but bruises do not count on active service. They are rather the outward and visible sign of an inward satisfaction on the part of the crew, the evidence of the rough and tumble of warfare. On the 18th of March 1915 there was a triple tragedy. Three battleships fought their last fight, and were 'buried at sea,' after the manner of sailors from time immemorial. They received their death-blow during a general attack upon the fortresses at the Narrows, and in each case it was struck from below. The Jack Tars who survived regarded this as the merciful dispensation of a kindly Providence. It would have been *infra dig.* for a battleship to surrender to a land battery. The sailor's natural point of view is that the earth is vastly inferior to the sea. Truth to tell, the lower deck was never infatuated by the glamour of the Dardanelles

operations any more than Portsmouth men have seen anything to be proud of in the chequered forts of Spithead. The *Irresistible*, the *Ocean*, and the *Bouvet* died of mine fever. That day the scavengers fished up three mines, and these veterans of the Fleet fished up three others—to their cost.

The disaster came about in this way. The sweepers had been at work for ten days to clear a passage, and we may be perfectly sure that Vice-Admiral J. M. de Robeck was perfectly satisfied with the result of their operations, otherwise the *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Inflexible*, the *Agamemnon* and the *Lord Nelson* would never have been allowed to proceed toward the Narrows, where the land pinches in the water to such an extent that in the vicinity of Chanak the channel is only about 1400 yards wide. They concentrated their guns on the now familiar forts known as Rumilieh Medjidieh Tabia, Hamidieh II Tabia, and Namazieh, on the European side, and Hamidieh I Tabia and Hamidieh III on the opposite shore. Simultaneously the *Triumph* and the *Prince George* attacked the batteries at Soghandere, Dardanos, and Kephez Point. The ships sustained the heavy fire of howitzers and field-guns from 10.45 A.M. until 12.22 P.M., when the *Suffren*, the *Gaulois*, the *Charlemagne*, and the *Bouvet*, of the French squadron, engaged the forts at closer range. The ten ships pounded away like Thor of old with his hammer, and four at least of the forts gave them

good measure in reply, with the result that not one of the vessels remained unhit when the land batteries ceased action a few minutes before 1.30.

Now was evidently the moment to exact complete victory. The *Vengeance*, the *Irresistible*, the *Albion*, the *Ocean*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Majestic* slowly advanced as the French ships withdrew. A few minutes sufficed to prove that the Turks and the Germans were playing their old game. The forts blazed out with renewed energy. Tragedy followed hastily on the heels of triumph. Five shells struck the *Bouvet*, whose bulgy sides, narrowing toward the deck, made her appear like a flat-bottomed boat floating upside down, with her funnels where her keel ought to be. Then she "seemed to stop in a great field of foam and hesitate," writes an eye-witness. "On board the *Gaulois* some one had only just time to say, 'What's the matter with the *Bouvet*?' when an explosion shook the atmosphere and clouded the sky, and so the *Bouvet* sank. We distinctly saw its two masts, which seemed to close in on one another as the hull opened. It was all over in a minute and a half." It is believed that the French battleship, which was of 12,205 tons displacement, and nearly twenty years old, managed to elude two floating mines, but was struck by a third floating canister of death. Officers and men went to their watery graves standing to attention and saluting the flag. "*Vive la France!*" were the last words these

brave sons of a brave race uttered, and they shouted them as their ship sank by the head. Only 64 of the *Bouvet's* crew of 630 were saved.

Undeterred by this disaster, the attack continued, and the sturdy little mine-sweepers went on with their work, directed by Commander William Mellor from a picket-boat. At about four o'clock the *Irresistible* was struck by a shell, and a minute later a mine exploded beneath her. She left the fighting line with a heavy list to port. The crew, obeying the order 'Everybody aft,' betrayed no sign of fear, though shells were bursting about them and the firing grew fiercer from the forts as the ship drifted toward the Asiatic shore. Then a destroyer came tearing through the water, her pace inordinately slow to the men who were compelled to stand and do nothing but wait for death or rescue. With marvellous dexterity the destroyer, which turned out to be the *Wear*, was brought to the side of the doomed ship. "Boys and ordinary seamen, in the boat!" shouted the Captain from the bridge, followed by "All hands next!" when the first order had been obeyed. With the exception of the officers on the bridge and a few men all had found a place on the destroyer when a shell burst, killing and wounding several on the quarter-deck. There were plenty of eager helpers to assist the injured, and they were tenderly passed down. A noble little band of heroes who had volunteered to stay behind

to cast off the hawsers which held fast the destroyer flung them overboard. With over 600 men the craft left the sinking vessel. How it came about that the *Wear* was not hit borders on the miraculous, for no sooner had she got under way than half a dozen shells struck the water where she had been but a minute before. Captain D. L. Dent and several officers remained on the *Irresistible*, quite unconcerned as to their personal safety. The shipwrecked crew were taken on board the *Queen Elizabeth*, and when the good news reached them later that the destroyer had gone back to fetch those who still remained on the poor old *Irresistible*, and had returned with them, not a few Jack Tars felt that awkward little lump which *will* rise in the throat on an occasion such as this. For his brilliant services in effecting this fine rescue Captain C. P. Metcalfe was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, while Midshipman Hugh Dixon, by saving the lives of several officers and men in the *Queen Elizabeth's* picket-boat while under heavy fire, gained the Distinguished Service Cross.

Exactly two hours after the *Irresistible* had been rendered *hors de combat* the *Ocean*, which had been standing by with the idea of taking her in tow, also struck a mine. A great rent was torn in the starboard side, the steering-gear was shattered, bursting the main steam-pipe of the starboard engine, and dismounting some of the guns. In two minutes no fewer than five destroyers were alongside, despite

a terrible cross-fire from Chanak and Kilid Bahr. One of the craft was hit by a shell below the water-line, but the inrush of water was almost completely stopped by the ready resourcefulness of a stoker. He promptly sat in the hole and remained in this uncomfortable position until a collision mat could be got out. Nothing could be done to salve the *Ocean*, and she sank in thirty-four fathoms of water. Nearly all her crew were saved. "Wherever we looked we could see nothing but huge splashes where the shells were pitching in the water," writes Harold White, who sounded the call 'Abandon ship.'

Three wrecks and the *Gaulois* put out of action by reason of the severe injuries she had sustained were surely sufficient disasters for one day. Yet almost at the same time as the *Ocean* had sustained her mortal wound the *Inflexible* had encountered a mine, which flooded her fore submerged flat. This was indeed adding insult to injury, for already she had been compelled to deal with a fire which broke out on her fore-bridge at the same time as the fore-top was hit by a shell. Every one in the latter was either killed or wounded. With superb coolness, for shells were bursting all around him, one of the injured men, Able Seaman Smedley, told a Petty Officer that he would carry him down to the deck. Though rapidly losing strength, the Petty Officer put his arms round the other's shoulders and gripped his rescuer's waist with his legs. Then began the



Destroyers rescuing the Crew of H.M.S. "Ocean"
PHILIP DADD

perilous descent of the swaying steel ladder until the rungs fixed to the leg of the tripod mast were gained. This was the most difficult part of the journey, but danger was far from over, for although the next section was steadier, projectiles were still whistling and bursting about them. Eventually Smedley and his human burden reached the deck. Then the A.B. climbed to the fore-top a second time and returned with a wounded man, repeated his perilous climb and his still more perilous descent, and started on a third attempt, which proved too much for his already overtaxed strength. Many wonderful deeds were performed by the officers and crew of the *Inflexible* when she was wounded and slowly making her way to Tenedos. Some of them have been tabulated by the Admiralty as follows :—

"Lieutenant-Commander Acheson, with Acting Sub-Lieutenant Alfred E. B. Giles, Chief Engine-room Artificer 2nd Class Robert Snowdon, and Stoker 1st Class Thomas Davidson, went down into the fore-magazine and shell-room of H.M.S. *Inflexible* when the parties working in these places had been driven out by the fumes, caused by the explosion of a mine under the ship ; they closed valves and water-tight doors, lights being out, the shell-room having two feet of water in it, rising quickly, and the magazine flooding slowly.

"The fumes were beginning to take effect on Acting

Sub-Lieutenant Giles, but neither he nor the others left until ordered to do so by Lieutenant-Commander Acheson, who was the last to leave the shell-room.

"During the time H.M.S. *Inflexible* was steaming to Tenedos, the engine-room being in semi-darkness and great heat, the ship in possible danger of sinking on passage, a high standard of discipline was called for in the Engineer Department, a call which was more than met. Engineer-Commander Harry Lashmore, C.B., responsible for the discipline of the engine-room department, was in the starboard engine-room throughout the passage, and set a fine example to his men. Engineer-Lieutenant-Commander Lester was in the port engine-room carrying out the same duties as Engineer-Commander Lashmore did in the starboard engine-room.

"Engineer-Lieutenant Parry went twice through the thick fumes to the refrigerator flat to see if the doors and valves were closed ; he also closed the escape hatch from the submerged flat, fumes and vapour coming up the trunk at the time.

"Surgeon Langford brought up the wounded from the fore distributing station in the dark. Fumes permeated the place, rendering five men unconscious. Surgeon Langford, though partially overcome by the fumes, continued his work. Chief Sick Berth Steward Hamlin, though partially overcome by fumes, assisted Surgeon Langford while the *Inflexible* was proceeding to Tenedos.

"Engine-room Artificer Runalls escaped up the trunk from the fore air-compressor room with difficulty, helped up his stoker, and closed the water-tight door of the trunk before he fell insensible."

All the officers mentioned above richly deserved the D.S.O. which was awarded them, as did the men their Conspicuous Gallantry Medals. The Distinguished Service Cross was granted to Sub-Lieutenant G. T. Philip, who was out in a boat 'spotting' floating mines when it was damaged by a shell, which wounded him in the knee. Despite his suffering he brought his crew back to the *Inflexible* and then personally went down into the engine-room and shut off steam.

The battle cruiser lost an able officer in Commander Verner, who was struck in the head and had his left hand shattered. He continued to smoke a cigarette almost until he died. The total British casualties were only sixty-one killed, wounded and missing.

At first the Admiral determined to renew the attack at the first opportunity, but on further consideration it was decided that land operations were also necessary. On his own confession, Mr Winston Churchill regretted this, and endeavoured to persuade Lord Fisher to telegraph to Admiral de Robeck that the naval attack was to be resumed. This the First Sea Lord refused to do. Although the Secretary of the Admiralty announced several days later that

"the amount of damage done to the forts by the bombardment of the 18th cannot be ascertained," and that "no great expectations should . . . be based on this" because "the attack was not pressed to its conclusion on that day," it was given out at the same time that "the power of the Fleet to dominate the fortresses by superiority of fire seems to be established." All three of the lost battleships were old, having been built between 1893 and 1898 at a cost of about £3,100,000. They were replaced by the *Queen*, the *Implacable* and the *Henri IV.* Marshal von der Goltz, in command of one of the Turkish armies, encouraged his friends at Constantinople by saying: "The more the enemy continues to try to force the Dardanelles the more we shall rejoice." His words proved only too true. The great general attack upon the fortresses at the Narrows had failed, and among those who witnessed it was General Sir Ian S. M. Hamilton, G.C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief of the Dardanelles Expeditionary Force. It was not an auspicious welcome, particularly as he found that the transports had been wrongly loaded. He had no alternative but to send them to Alexandria to be adjusted, thereby delaying all thought of landing for several weeks and giving the Turks an excellent opportunity to complete their arrangements for the defence of the peninsula. The ships, however, continued to sweep for mines and to bombard the forts when the weather was propitious,

so as to render the task of repairing the damaged works as difficult as possible.

The Battle of the Landing on Sunday, the 25th April 1915, belongs rather to the Army than to the senior service, although, of course, the Navy had to carry the brave sons of the Empire on its broad back until they could jump from the boats and wade ashore. The troops were to disembark in two main landings, the first at a point north of Gaba Tepe, and the second at beaches V, W, and X, near Cape Helles, while feints were made at S and Y, on either side of the toe of the peninsula, to protect the flanks and hold the enemy in check. Five battleships, one cruiser, eight destroyers, fifteen trawlers, the *Ark Royal* and the balloon ship *Manica* were concerned in the landing near Gaba Tepe, which was covered by gun-fire from the *Triumph*, the *Majestic*, and the *Bacchante*. Howitzers and field guns, as well as fire from warships at Chanak, were at once brought to bear on the transports, while the narrow beach was swept by shrapnel. It was under these terrible conditions that the Australians effected a foothold, which was not completed until the 26th.

The squadron for the landings at the five points to the south was made up of seven battleships, four cruisers, six mine-sweepers, and fourteen trawlers.

The *Amethyst* and the *Sapphire*, with the transports the *Southland* and the *Braemar Castle*, landed their troops and the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal

Marines at Y beach, west of Krithia, at about 4 A.M., covered by the *Goliath*. The Scottish Borderers and the Marines boldly scaled the steep cliffs, but after severe fighting were compelled to re-embark on the following day. The landing at X, near Cape Tekeh, was carried out from the *Implacable* and was entirely successful, but at W, between Cape Helles and Cape Tekeh, where the same ship and the *Euryalus* disembarked some of the Lancashire Fusiliers, the fire from the vessels was unable to clear the enemy's wire entanglements and trenches, and the Turks brought all manner of guns to bear on the attacking party. The troops, however, pushed on despite heavy losses, and the maxims which enfiladed the main beach were rushed with the bayonet. A particularly fierce resistance was offered at V, a strip of about 300 yards dominated by Sed dul Bahr, and it was not until the afternoon of the 26th that it was captured. Here 2000 men were landed by the *River Clyde*, a collier nicknamed 'the New Horse of Troy,' because Commander Edward Unwin had conceived the happy idea of having huge ports cut in her sides, through which the men could pour out on to gangways supported by lighters and land directly on the beach. The *River Clyde* was run ashore under a terrific fire, but almost as soon as the lighters had been got into position some of them broke adrift. Commander Unwin promptly jumped into the water to secure them. He worked away until he was

almost exhausted, returned to the ship to get back his circulation, and against the doctor's orders went back and finished his task. He was helped by two midshipmen and two seamen. Midshipman G. L. Drewry, R.N.R., although wounded in the head, made two bold attempts to secure the lighters with a line. When his strength gave out the rope was secured by Midshipman W. St. A. Malleson, R.N., who succeeded. Then the line broke, and he tried again and again, only to fail. Able Seaman W. C. Williams, after holding on to a line in the water for over an hour under heavy fire, was killed. Seaman G. McK. Samson was also dangerously wounded after working on a lighter all day, during which time he assisted the wounded and got out lines. Each of these four heroes was awarded the Victoria Cross. Volunteer crews from the *Albion* attempted to complete the gangway, but could not get their boats into position, owing to the enemy's watchfulness, until darkness obscured their movements.

During the night a hill dominating the position was captured by other forces, and the beach was won. At Camber, a little to the south of S, where the men secured a firm footing, some of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers attempted to reach the village of Sed dul Bahr, and had to be withdrawn. The French landing at Kum Kale, which was also undertaken to distract the enemy while the main attack was delivered, was successful, but as it was found that

no progress could be made the soldiers were withdrawn. "From the very first," says Vice-Admiral de Robeck, "the co-operation between the Army and Navy was most happy."

For many months the military and naval forces of the Allies fought with Turks, Germans, and Nature in the peninsula, gaining a few yards here, losing a few yards there. When the troops were told that it was to be evacuated they just gripped their rifles a little tighter, jerked the packs on their backs to give them more freedom of movement, squared their jaws, looked more grim than ever, and set off to take part in another campaign. That is why we are called a nation of bull-dogs. The last man left on the morning of the 9th January 1916, thereby closing a long and tragic chapter of the history of the Great War.

If the blood of the martyrs be the seed of the Church, it is equally true that the British Empire has been built on the bones of its soldiers and sailors. God's bottle holds the tears of many valiant warriors. Not a few were shed in the shambles of Gallipoli.

CHAPTER XIX

'THE DAY' OFF JUTLAND

THE officers of the Kaiser's navy had drunk to the toast of *Der Tag* for years. 'The Day' was to mark the end of Britain's rule of the waves and the beginning of Germany's overlordship of the seas. It became the obsession of an empire. The how, when, and where of the matter were weighty problems that used up much grey matter in the brains of the big men of Kiel and Wilhelmshaven. They were solved in the great fight that began on the last day of May 1916, and ended on the anniversary of the "glorious first of June." The result is summed up in breezy sailor fashion by one "Ben," who played his part in H.M.S. *Princess Royal*: "All merry and bright. We have had a ripping time with the Huns."

Der Tag found the proud array of the main German fleet at sea off Jutland battling with a British cruiser squadron that was decidedly inferior in numbers; it concluded with Sir John Jellicoe cruising about the scene of the conflict on the following day with not an enemy ship on the horizon. Those units of the Kaiser's armada that had escaped had scuttled back to refit or to be

scrapped. Few, if any, that had been in action could have returned in robust health. The Dreadnoughts which the Germans had so often stated were "skulking among the reeds of Ireland" were in undisputed possession, with the White Ensign flying from their sterns in token of the fact that Britain was still Mistress of the Seas.

In the opening phase of the greatest of modern sea fights fortune favoured the enemy. The atmospheric conditions were somewhat similar to those against which Cradock had to contend off Coronel when the sun had set. The British ships were silhouetted against the sky; those of the enemy were shrouded to an appreciable extent by haze, which made range-finding difficult. The Germans were close to their base, the British hundreds of miles from home. So far as can be ascertained at the time of writing, Beatty had with him, in addition to destroyers and light cruisers, four warriors of the Dogger Bank battle—the *Lion*, the *Princess Royal*, the *Tiger*, and the *New Zealand*—and the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable*. Some time afterward three giants born in 1915, the *Barham*, the *Valiant*, and the *Warspite*, and the *Malaya*, completed in 1916, came upon the scene, followed by the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, which had dealt death-blows off the Falklands, the *Indomitable*, the *Warrior*, the *Defence*, and the *Black Prince*. Against them was pitted the full force of the German High Sea Fleet.

'The Day' off Jutland

The aim of the German commander was to out-manœuvre Beatty and annihilate him before the great British battleships could appear; the aim of Beatty was to out-manœuvre Scheer and fight him until help arrived. Beatty won, and with a grip of steel hung on with grim determination while stokers shovelled and turbines tore to bring Jellicoe to the scene of the conflict.

The human interest of the story is in the ships and their men, not in the tactics of the battle. We shall never have a full report, because some of the vessels carried their story with them to the bed of the ocean. First of all let us deal with some of the things that happened while Beatty was bearing the heat and burden of the day unsupported, drawing the enemy "into the jaws of our Fleet," to quote his own words. The *Invincible*, the first of the British battle cruisers to go down, took heavy toll before she sank to her blue-water grave. She first tackled a light cruiser, and sent her to the bottom in five minutes. She next opened fire at a ship of the *Derffiinger* or *Kaiser* class, and scored several hits. "While we were at it the gunnery was magnificent," was the verdict of a survivor who was picked up by a destroyer. Then came a shell that tore a great gaping hole in one of her turrets. Apparently it found its way down the open ammunition hoist and exploded the magazine. Sturdee's former flag-ship just broke in halves and disappeared in a welter

of oil. Hundreds of gallant officers and men who had longed for action went with her, including Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace Hood, Second-in-Command of the Battle Cruiser Squadron. One of the few who were saved was Lieutenant C. S. Sanford, who bobbed up from the trough with as genial a smile as ever was visible on an Irishman's face. Back of the smile was the spirit which has made Britain paramount on her own chosen element. Commander Dannreuther was rendered unconscious by the terrific force of the explosion, and when he came to he found himself in the water. Ship and crew were nowhere to be seen.

The guns of the *Queen Mary* did not begin to bark and bite until shortly after five o'clock. From start to finish they kept up a steady fire. About twenty minutes later she received the full shock of a salvo on the quarter-deck, which blazed up and probably exploded the second magazine, thereby breaking the back of the ship. A second explosion occurred in the fore part, leaving nothing but a mass of wreckage to mark the graves of 1200 heroes. "She broke up and sank," said an eye-witness, "in a wild confusion of red glare and smoke so thick that it looked solid, and a terrific thunder-clap of an explosion that sounded loud above the steady roar of the guns." A gunlayer of the *Tiger* who also saw what happened on the *Queen Mary* stated that "every shell that the Germans threw

seemed suddenly to strike the battle cruiser at once. It was as if a whirlwind was smashing a forest down, and reminded me very much of the rending that is heard when a big vessel is launched and the stays are being smashed. She seemed to roll slowly to starboard, her mast and funnels gone, and with a huge hole in her side. She listed again, the hole disappeared beneath the water, which rushed into her, and turned her completely over. A minute and a half and all that could be seen of the *Queen Mary* was her keel, and then that disappeared."[1] As one of her consorts passed the spot where she had sunk a middy on the look-out saw what he characterized as "the finest thing I have ever seen." Four men on a raft cheered with the frantic fervour of football devotees.

The *Warrior* proved worthy of the name she bore. She gave no quarter in her last feverish half-hour of life. She entered into action just before six o'clock, and the third shell that left the starboard gun of the fore-turret crumpled up the third funnel of an enemy cruiser nearly 16,000 yards away. Then 12-in. shells began to make their presence known and felt, many falling in the sea, a few taking deadly effect. Again and again the captain altered his course, thereby avoiding the full force of the terrible storm of steel. The dynamos were put out of action, a shell tore through the deck and played havoc in

[1] *The Daily Telegraph.*

the engine-room, and the stokeholds were flooded. Survivors assert that the *Warrior* was engaged by a battle cruiser and two light cruisers at the same time, and it has even been stated that she was the target for half a dozen German vessels. Soon the after part of the ship was in flames and she was leaking badly. While some of the crew tried with feverish energy to keep the fire under, others prepared for the order 'Abandon ship,' which now seemed inevitable. She retired from the line in a sinking condition, covered by the *Warspite*, which passed between her and the enemy and continued the fighting to much advantage. Eventually the fire was got under control, and something was done to reduce the intake of water, for she was badly holed below. There seemed a chance of saving her, and the chance was seized. A hawser was thrown from another ship and made fast. The *Warrior* lumbered on for ten hours, making a distance of less than fifty miles. After a night of tugging and straining, during which calm weather gave place to an ugly sea, the cruiser settled down until the quarter-decks were awash. Then, and not till then, the men forsook their old friend.

The *Warspite* played a valiant part. She came through the action practically unscathed, though her wireless was shot away and her funnels were scarred. How she went to the aid of the stricken *Warrior* when that ship was exposed to an awful

concentration of fire at close range has already been told, but the ringing cheer of the men of the helpless ship in their dire distress cannot be echoed on paper. Like the heroine who fought for her children when the dervishes entered Khartoum and murdered Gordon, the battleship swept close to the wounded cruiser and put her great steel body directly in opposition to the enemy. They say that she speedily sank one of her opponents, that a shell damaged her steering-gear, that Beatty signalled "Come back; you are sacrificing yourself." One cannot vouch for the truth of these things, but we know that her 15-in. guns continued their deadly work until her part in the battle was finished, and that afterward Admiral Thomas congratulated the men on the important part they had played in the great struggle for Sea Power off the Danish coast.

What shall we say of those wonderful units of the Black Navy, the destroyers? Greater praise cannot be given than this, that they carried out what was expected of them with amazing zeal. There is no finer tale of the sea than the one which the survivors of the *Shark* had to tell. Two columns of German destroyers were rushing ahead. She steered between them, torpedoed a craft on each beam, and kept up a running and merciless fire until a shell exploded on the forecastle, killing everybody there; a second shell smashed one of the propellers and damaged the steering-gear, while a third penetrated

the oil-tank. Pretty well everything on deck was carried away and scores of men lay dead. She was herself struck on the port and starboard by torpedoes. Commander Loftus W. Jones, with one of his legs shot away above the knee, was firing the only gun that had not been put out of action as the vessel foundered.

The *Onslaught*, tearing along at top speed, dashed up to an enemy battleship, discharged a couple of torpedoes into her great bulky mass, and sank her. The pygmy had conquered the giant. True, she suffered for it, but brave hearts recked not of suffering and death on craft such as these and sister destroyers—the *Fortune*, the *Acasta*, and the rest. "Theirs but to do and die"!

At least one German submarine was sent to Davy Jones's Locker, thanks to the splendid handling of a sleek destroyer. She was in the thick of the fight when one of those men who from long experience know the meaning of almost every ripple on the water made out the track of a torpedo. The ship answered her helm instantly, otherwise there would be a destroyer less in the British Navy to-day. She swung round with the ease of a racing yacht in the Solent, and the wicked, submerged dart sped harmlessly by. Then the commander steered a course in the direction whence the torpedo had come. There was no time lost, for submarines are as slippery as eels. It could have come from

no other type of ship, because none was sufficiently near at the moment. The T.B.D. raced along at thirty knots, paying less heed to the fire that was concentrated on her by two ships out of torpedo range than to a suspicious foam ahead. It flung away the foam when it got up to it, and the muffled sound of tearing metal reached the ears of the men on the destroyer.

Comedy, twin of Tragedy, was evident in this struggle of giants and pygmies. A baker on a British warship had some hundreds of pounds of dough rising in his bakehouse on the upper deck. The fire had to be put out, but he thoughtfully placed his batch of bread in the oven nevertheless, and went to a less exposed place to read *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius.* During a lull in the conflict he called for two volunteers, took out his precious loaves, which had become nicely baked, and then went back to his action station.

After the ships had returned to their bases a stoker went to London without leave, with the result that he was charged before a magistrate as an absentee. "My mother's a bit nervous like," he explained to the Bench, "so after this 'ere little argyment in th' North Sea I just popped 'ome to show her I was all right, an' then I suppose I got adrift a bit." "Would it not have done just as well," suggested the stipendiary, "if you had sent a telegram saying you were all right?"

"Well, now, I suppose it would," came the reply, "but, do you know, I never thought of that."

If this chapter has dwelt upon losses rather than gains, it is to show the price that has to be paid in death dues for our goodly heritage. The Germans paid heavily for *Der Tag*. As estimated by the British Admiralty, the High Sea Fleet was mulcted of two battleships, two battle cruisers, two light cruisers, two other cruisers, nine destroyers, and one submarine. The British vessels that disappeared from the Navy List during the battle off Jutland numbered three battle cruisers, three cruisers, and eight destroyers.

The official report is significant. "When the main body of the British Fleet came into contact with the German High Sea Fleet, a very brief period sufficed to compel the latter, who had been severely punished, to seek refuge in their protected waters. This manœuvre was rendered possible by low visibility and mist; and although the Grand Fleet was now and then able to get into momentary contact with their opponents, no continuous action was possible. They continued the pursuit until the light had wholly failed, while the British destroyers were able to make a successful attack upon the enemy during the night. Meanwhile, Sir John Jellicoe, having driven the enemy into port, returned to the main scene of action, and scoured the sea in search of the disabled vessels. By noon the next

day [1st June] it became evident that there was nothing more to be done. He returned, therefore, to his bases, 400 miles away, refuelled his fleet, and in the evening of 2nd June was again ready to put to sea."

Let the stirring words of one of the greatest of Britain's sea-dogs bring this incomplete record of brave deeds to a fitting conclusion. They were addressed by Admiral Beatty to the officers and men of the *Lion*, the *Tiger*, and the *Princess Royal*, on the return of the Battle Cruiser Squadron to its base after the fight off Jutland :

"I offer you my sincere thanks for what will ever remain in history a gallant day. I told a lot of you here present on August 4 what we hoped to do. What I said then is that which we have now carried out.

"I suppose most of you have girls—some of you more than one—who will ask what you have done. Tell them you did your duty, which the British are always doing. You can take it from me now that the damage we inflicted on the Germans was far greater than that which they inflicted on us. They have lost two battleships, two battle cruisers of the most modern type, including the battle cruiser *Lützow*, four light cruisers, and destroyers so numerous that we have not managed to count them.

"I want to offer you my sincere sympathy.

Britain's Sea-dogs

We have all lost relatives, friends, and shipmates, who have given up their lives in a most gallant manner. But their valuable lives have not been wasted, and there will be a day when we will take further toll for them. Give my kindest sympathy and regards to the relatives of those who died so gloriously.

"We have now to get our ships in a good condition for the second round. We have only had the first round, but in the second I think they will finally throw up the sponge."

Readers, the toast is, "The British Navy."

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